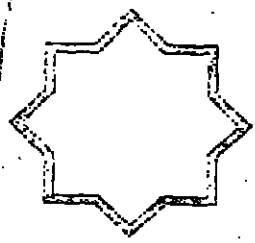


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Peace process founders as Hebron talks hit impasse

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

MORE THAN three weeks of intensive talks between Israelis and Palestinians foundered last Monday on mutual indecision and distrust. US special envoy Dennis Ross, dispatched in the aftermath of gun battles that left more than 70 Palestinians dead, announced he is flying back to Washington without a deal. However, talks between the two sides resumed Tuesday.

Both parties have described the talks, which center on the West Bank city of Hebron, as the first important test since Israel changed governments of the three-year-old bargaining framework that brought decades of armed conflict to a hesitant close.

Neither side declared a crisis Monday night. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, whose presence is necessary to reach an agreement, left on a six-day trip to Europe in what appeared to be a deliberate stalling tactic to persuade Israel to be more flexible. Arafat isn't expected back until today, Thursday, at the earliest.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the Palestinians of not being able to make a decision on the proposed redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron.

"It was possible to close this agreement last night, I have no doubt of this," he told a news conference Monday.

It now seems unlikely that the long-delayed accord on turning over control of the West Bank town of Hebron to the new Palestinian Authority can be reached before the US presidential elections on 5 November. Netanyahu has close ties with presidential contender Bob Dole and strained relations with President Clinton growing out of the latter's support for the Labor candidate in Israeli elections. Middle East analysts predicted the Israeli leader would delay an agreement on Hebron until just before the US Election Day.

But with Clinton the almost certain victor, they said, Netanyahu may see it to his advantage to conclude the deal now.

or, that failing, to put the onus on Arafat. One White House aide said the agreement could be wrapped up on Election Day.

A top Palestinian official charged that, throughout the peace talks, the Israelis have tried to change the terms of the redeployment as previously stipulated in the Oslo peace accords.

Ahmed Qurei, known as Abu Alaa, said he was with Arafat when the Palestinian leader received a call from President Clinton over the weekend. Arafat told Clinton, "I will do all that's within my capacity as much as possible to finish this deal tonight," Abu Alaa said.

Arafat "even gave a little concession regarding security but Netanyahu gave nothing," added Abu Alaa, president of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

American officials denied that Ross's departure meant the talks had broken down. They predicted an agreement ultimately would be reached over Hebron, but could not say when. Nor could they give a date when Ross would resume mediating between Arafat and Netanyahu.

The State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns said Ross will return to the region shortly. "There will be an agreement. We are confident of that. It may take a week or two or three or four," Burns said. He added "I think it's wrong, and I think it's also just not consistent with the facts to point at Chairman Arafat and say, 'He's the guy holding these talks up' or 'Had he stayed', these talks would have succeeded today or tomorrow."

Ross disguised a helicopter shuttle mission to Gaza as a condolence call on Arafat Sunday.

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Murder of Arab boy threatens an all-out confrontation in West Bank

By Barton Gellman

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

HUSSAN, West Bank—Nahum Korman, director of security for the nearby Jewish settlement of Hadar Beit, sped toward this Arab village north of Hebron to "investigate reports" of stone-throwing by Palestinian youths.

He wheeled his jeep off the settlement road, charged up a steep hillside path and cornered three boys Sunday afternoon on a rocky lot. Within a few minutes the youngest of them, a slightly built fifth-grader named Hilmi Shousha, lay dying of a heavy blow to the neck.

In separate interviews here Tuesday the two surviving boys, Tahir Shousha, 14, and Ibrahim Shousha, 12, said Korman burst out of his jeep with pistol in hand and kicked their 11-year-old cousin to the ground, stomping him on the neck while he was down. Israeli police said Korman, who is in their custody pending a manslaughter investigation, told them Hilmi "slipped and fell against a boulder" and has declined to answer any questions since.

Hilmi's funeral procession Tuesday morning—complete with rain, sleet, Israeli troops, rubber bullets and tear gas and thousands of angry mourners casting stones—captured something of the ugly atmosphere that has descended on Israeli-Palestinian relations as the politics of peace slowed to a halt: provocative, confrontational, mendacious and above all tribal on both sides.

The aftermath followed a kind of script that has been the norm for years. Israeli troops placed the village under curfew and found the time, according to Palestinian legislator Salah Tamari, to ticket one driver in the funeral cortege for failing to wear his seatbelt. Hilmi's body was held aloft, draped in the black, white, red and green of Palestinian nationalism, as mourners made nasty comments about "the Jews." His father Salim Shousha, unshaven face haggard with grief, pretended to celebrate the day "as a wedding" because his son was "martyred for God."

Many Palestinians denied a single rock was thrown and said Korman descended on the village Sunday and Israeli soldiers Tuesday for no reason. Jewish settlers, including Akiva Ovitz of Hadar Beit, stated categorically that Hilmi had fallen and hurt himself, though none witnessed his mortal injury and none could have spoken to Korman since.

Incidents like this took place even as the peace talks were at their height. Yet a bleak new energy pervades of late, and there are far fewer signs of solidarity to stand in counterpoint.

In Hebron, a bit south of here, Palestinian cabinet minister Yasser Abed Rabbo and Ahmed Tibi, an Israeli Arab leader, were set upon by Jewish settlers screaming epithets. Naam Arnon, a spokesman for the Hebron Jewish community, said the two were "members of an organization that we define as a terrorism organization" and their presence near a Jewish neighborhood was "a provocation."

Yisrael Lederman, who was videotaped throwing scalding

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L'hebdo Abed Rabbo joue avec la scène politique en Jordanie

Voir page 12



HIS MAJESTY King Hussein paid a one-day visit to Sharm Al Sheikh, Tuesday, where he met with the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The two leaders discussed the latest developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track. During a joint press conference, the two leaders stressed the need for complete implementation of the agreements signed between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

On the European role in the peace process, King Hussein said "I think Europe has an important role to play because it's close to our region and is interested in restarting the peace process." He added that "Europe is not seeking a role that would contradict that of the United States but one that would complement it."

President Mubarak said the European efforts could "bolster American efforts in restoring peace in the region." He added that "Israel's failure to implement its peace agreements with the Palestinians made Arabs lose confidence in the peace process."

New challenges awaiting government in the next ordinary session

By Hamdan Al Hajj

Special to The Star
AS THE date for convening of the fourth and last ordinary session of the 12th Lower House approaches, Parliamentary blocs appear to be gearing up to what appears as a tough time ahead.

The fight over the speaker-ship of the Lower House is seen as developing into a fierce one despite the fact that the current speaker deputy Sa'ad Hayel Sroor is expected to be returned.

The major support for Al Sroor is likely to come from the 22 deputy/ministers including the Prime Minister himself, Mr. Abdel Karim Kabariti. Under his belt is also the votes of the 19 National Action Front (NAF) deputies—five of which are ministers—that are headed by the Minister of Public Works and Housing, Mr. Abdel Hadi Al Majali. The six-deputy Ikha'a (brotherhood) bloc headed by Mr. Abdel Raouf Al Rawabdeh are also likely to vote for Al Sroor.

However, Mr. Sroor is also likely to have independent deputies who will vote against his



Al Sroor

re-election for a third consecutive time.

The second competing candidate for the position of speaker is deputy Samir Habashneh. He already has the support of 17 centrist deputies. However he may seek the support of the opposition bloc.

But the opposition deputies that include the Islamic Action Front (IAF), leftists and nationalists, are still to take a decision on the issue. They claim that some of their deputies are

much more qualified to stand for the position. Names that are circulating around the chamber include Abdullah Al Akaleh, Abdel Rahim Al Ukour, Basam Haddadin, Trad Al Qadi and Abdullah Akhu Isbeidah.

If the speaker-ship position is solved then observers argue that parliamentary blocs will continue to maneuver for the deputy speaker, although the post is expected to go for one of the NAF deputies. But what is argued for sure is that internal bickering will come to the surface once the Lower House's general secretariat is formed.

But this is seen as the beginning of a long headache for the government and not only from the opposition it is suggested.

The opposition led by the IAF is expected to censure the government on its handling of the Karak riots last August and in dealing with the issue of corruption. On the other hand, the government will be forced to defend its policies. Parliamentary watchers say if they do that then they will create more disquiet among the deputies.

By John Daniszewski
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

CAIRO—For 36 hours, she sat in darkness, pinned to her waist by the rubble of a collapsed apartment building. But her "screaming and praying" paid off Tuesday for Samantha Miksche, as she was pulled from the ruins that authorities here fear may have fatally entombed scores of others.

The 17-year-old American was cut, bruised, nauseous and desperately thirsty. But she had miraculously survived a horrifying ordeal: Gripping the hand of an Egyptian companion who also was rescued Tuesday, the trapped teen had listened, helplessly, to the sounds of bulldozers and rescuers working above her, as well as to fading cries for help coming from others, dying and buried alive.

"It was terrifying," she recounted from her hospital bed here Tuesday night. "I was just begging God to help me—saying whatever I could—constantly saying, 'Please, God, help me! Please have mercy!' I just didn't want to die this early and this painfully."

elated to be alive Tuesday, she now must suffer the anguish of knowing that her mother has not been found in the toppled 12-story apartment building where rescue operations entered their third day Tuesday night.

Hopes for more survivors faded with each passing hour, especially as victim rescues grew fewer and further apart. A scent of death wafted above the mud-colored

mountain of debris, swarmed over by sniffing dogs and German technicians with sensitive listening devices to detect any signs of life. The confirmed death toll at the building, which crashed without warning Sunday evening, rose on Tuesday to 25. But authorities fear up to 100 people may still be unaccounted for. On Tuesday, the building owner and two construction engineers were arrested amid charges that five extra stories had been illegally added onto the apartment.



Searching for survivors in the rubble

Crowds also gathered at the disaster site, clamoring for their missing or dead relatives and demanding retribution and justice.

Miksche—who is nursing minor injuries, including dehydration, scratches, a badly swollen right foot and knees—had gone to the doomed building with her mother and a

friend, Noha Fawzi, 21, to look at a furnished apartment. Miksche and her mother thought they might lease the unit, short-term, until they returned to the United States in a month or so.

Their presence in Cairo was hardly unusual, friends and relatives said. Miksche and her tight-knit family have an

international flair. She was born in Australia. Her mom, Samira, was born in Egypt and later became a US citizen; her father, Rudolf, is Austrian.

Mikshe and her mother loved to travel and had been here for five months on an extended vacation, spending time with family and friends, Mikshe said.

They were in the apartment only five minutes or so when catastrophe struck: She and

Continued on page 2

The doomed Cairo building claimed the lives of a Jordanian family of three. Wasim Khorsheed Admani (56), his wife Wijdan (47) and their son Mohamed (24) died when the 12-story Heilopolis apartment building tumbled Sunday. Miraculously their 16-year-old daughter, Fatma, left the apartment, where the ill-fated family had been living since 1982, for school minutes before catastrophe struck.

Hebronites fear outcome of talks will be far below their expectations

By Hamdan Al Hajj

Special to The Star
HEBRON—The latest Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the sticking issue of the redeployment of the Israeli troops in Hebron, which was agreed to by the former Labor government, is having a hard and arduous ride. They have just ended in failure. Despite the fact that they will very probably start again, the people of Hebron are deeply dissatisfied. They believe that any deal reached will be far below expectations.

As part of the Oslo Accord, Israel turned over control of eight West Bank cities to Arafat's Palestinian National Authority. Except for Jerusalem, Hebron is the only city that is still under Israeli occupation. The situation in Hebron remains tense since the Israeli army was supposed to start troop redeployment over six months ago.

The 120,000 Hebronites are living under harsh conditions. They are constantly harassed by the 400-Israeli militant settlers who threaten the stability of the city. A somewhat paralyzed goods market adds to the agony of Palestinians in Hebron. However, Israel insists on dividing the city into a Jewish and Arab sections.

A Hebron deal is crucial to reviving the peace process launched in 1993. But the talks have been difficult because of the importance Muslims and Jews attach to the city as the site of Abraham's tomb. Israelis are now digging a



Hebron on a time bomb!

tunnel in Hebron which links the center of the city with the Qiryat Arba' settlement passing under Al Dabay area, Usama School and the Ibrahim Mosque.

Mustafa Al Natshah, head of the Hebron Municipality says "The situation here is critical, the best solution to the daily problems of the people of Hebron is to get settlers out of the city so that Palestinians can live in security."

Al Natshah told The Star the boiling situation in Hebron is a sign of what could happen in Jerusalem. "Hebron is an Arab and Islamic city and it will continue to be so, there is no dividing it."

"What is happening now is a battle of wills. As the inhabitants of Hebron remained patient for a long time under

Israeli occupation, they would be willing to be more patient for years to come. However, they reject any reversal of the Hebron agreement which was reached seven months ago between the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and Israel.

Jamal Al Shobaki, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), stresses that the position of Palestinian negotiators are much stronger than before because of the moral support it receives from Arab countries.

Al Shobaki added that, "the European Union and the whole world fully supports the Palestinians. This should make the hand of Palestinian negotiators more firm in rejecting any attempt to change the Palestin-

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Arab Bank Manages a Dual Currency Syndicated Loan for Jordan Mobile Telephone Service Co. Ltd.

A DUAL currency syndicated loan agreement in the amount of JD (10) million and USD \$ (4.25) million for Jordan Mobile Telephone Service Co. Ltd. was signed at Arab Bank head office/ Shmeisani.

Present in the signing ceremony were the representatives of the participating banks, and the borrower.

The loan will be utilized by the borrower to finance the investment cost of completing the Mobile Telephone network to cover all areas of Jordan by the end of 1998 with a total cost estimated at USD \$ (85) million. This loan will be paralled in its security with another loan the company has obtained from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in the amount of USD \$ (15) million. It represents, with its innovative structure, an important addition to the Jordanian Capital Market which recently witnessed some important developments.

This loan will help fulfill one of the significant infrastructure projects of the private sector, as the borrower is fully owned by the private sector with the participation of an international strategic partner (i.e. Motorola).

The loan which is managed by Arab Bank includes the following participating banks in addition to Arab Bank, the Housing Bank, Citibank N.A./Amman, Union Bank for Savings and Investment, ANZ Grindlays, British Bank of the Middle East, Social Security Corporation, Jordan Investment and Finance Bank, ABC/Jordan and Export and Finance Bank.

Wounded Palestinians recall events of the second Intifada

By Manal Omar and Oroub Al Abed
Special to The Star

WITH GREAT pain he leaned forward, his lips muttering the word "Israeli." His voice barely audible. His weak fingers briefly formed that of a gun, as he tried to explain what happened to him on the fateful day of 25 September. There was not much more to add. His condition as he lay on the hospital bed was self explanatory. The bullet which penetrated his right eye not only stole from him his sight, but also left him semi-paralyzed on the left side of his body.

When Hussein woke up on Thursday morning he had no plans other than to go to work in the tailor shop in Gaza. The call for a peaceful protest echoed throughout the streets of the Occupied Territories, as demonstrators began to march towards the Azeit checkpoint. Hussein was one of those who could not deny the call. The peaceful demonstrators were greeted by a hostile Israeli retaliation. The Israeli soldiers randomly opened fire on the masses of people gathered to protest the Israeli government's decision to open the tunnel threatening Al Aqsa Mosque.

The protesters did not know what they hoped to accomplish through their march. All the Palestinian youth like Hussein knew was that their voices must be heard. As if by instinct, the peaceful march seemed the solution. It was beyond their imagination that the demonstration would erupt in a full scale slaughtering. On the ground Israeli soldiers opened fire with the 800 machine gun, while the helicopters from above rained bullets on the unsuspecting crowd.

"Every minute a person was wounded, and in less than two hours casualties equalled 350 in Jabalia refugee camp," describes an eye witness to *The Star*. As the bodies began to fall, the Palestinians—from soldiers, to workers, to students—were overwhelmed with outrage.

"It was a war," states Dr Ahmed Arabiyat, the surgeon in Jordan entrusted with the care of 13 Palestinians who were injured during what he calls the Al Aqsa War. The chain of events that were sparked by the incident on that Thursday morning received international attention. The international community fears

that the Likud's actions which were an obstacle for peace are raised once more. Jordanian attention represented by His Majesty King Hussein was at its zenith. King Hussein announced the opening of all Jordanian hospitals to receive those injured during the protests.

The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery, whose president is Dawoud Hannaniya, is the only private hospital to accept the injured. This is not the first time that the hospital has volunteered to absorb the cost of treatments for the casualties of war. The Arab Center opened its doors to those injured in Chechnya the previous year.

The Arab Center would send their own ambulances to the jir (bridge), to receive patients. As of today, the Arab Center is the only private hospital to treat the injured at no cost. "This is understandable. These incidents are very expensive. It's a matter of accumulated costs from long stays in the hospital, detailed treatments, several operations, and multiple interactions taking time and equipment." Those injured raised sympathy from the community in Jordan as well. Representatives from El Beireh Society, Al Almagid, the Popular Democratic Unity Party, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Syria, Laila Khalid, the family of Al Nabulsi, and Mr Boulos Fakhouri a priest from Al Salt Church visited the hospital with gifts. "These people are our dignity, so when we help them we are working to raise our own dignity," explained Dr Arabiyat.

The Aqsa War was not only an attack on the protesters, but on the Palestinian population. "This is unlike anything we have seen in the Intifada. The type of retaliation used was that of a full scale war," explains Mohammed, an eyewitness to the events. The Israelis used tanks, helicopters spraying bullets with machine guns, and snipers positioned throughout the Occupied Territories. "They were shooting to kill," states Dr Arabiyat. Indeed, the shots were aimed in crucial areas, the heart and the brain were the primary targets. "If the people were not killed, there was a great chance that they would be maimed for life, such as the cases we have here," added Dr Arabiyat.

"This is a part of the Likud policies. They were compensating to the fact that they did

not participate in halting the Intifada," continues Mohammed. The soldiers had opened fire on all those in the vicinity. The first martyr in the Aqsa War was a 13 year-old girl on her way home from school. The girl was found in a pool of blood in the middle of the street, a victim of the Israeli's haphazard shootings.

The Israelis also opened fire on those trying to rescue the injured. "They wanted to divide the Palestinians: either you attack or you be a peaceful observer," explains Hamdey, a 36 year-old mechanical engineer who was caught in the cross fire. Hamdey received two bullets in the head and another in his left leg. Many humanitarian organizations in the area were calling for volunteers to donate blood or to provide transportation for those who were injured. Hamdey and three of his friends responded to the call. They volunteered to transport those who were injured to nearby hospitals or ambulances. During one of the calls, Hamdey caught a bullet in the head. One of his colleagues ran out to pull him out of the firing range and was also shot, dying instantly. Determined not to leave Hamdey, another friend, Waleed, ran out at a second attempt to save him. Waleed was shot in his spinal cord, leaving him at the age of 29 paralyzed for life. Another friend attempted to rush Waleed and Hamdey to the hospital. Despite the fact that they were in an ambulance, the Israelis opened fire once more. The driver was shot, claiming the life of another person whose only crime was answering the humanitarian call.

Even as he lay helpless on the bed, Hamdey is still concerned about the Palestinians. "I am one of the luckier ones. I had someone to get me medical help. But what about the many others?"

Hamdey was one of the few who received medical attention. Others were not so fortunate. During the confusion, hospitals were over filled with fatal wounds and doctors and nurses were largely outnumbered by their patients. Yasser, a 20 year-old from Nablus in his second year at the University of Beir Zeit, was among those who received medical attention too late. When Yasser was shot in the heart by a sniper there was no medical aid, and in an attempt to stop the bleeding a friend pressed on his heart. This prevented



oxygen from flowing to his brain. He was rushed to Rafidia hospital in Nablus. His situation was so critical, and the hospital overflowing with medical emergencies, that the doctors were forced to operate in the hall. At that point the doctors considered his case hopeless, and he was announced as the first martyr on the radio.

However, the doctors sensed Yasser's struggle to stay alive, and decided to send him to Jordan. Yasser was sent to the borders on the Saturday after he was shot. The Israeli forces delayed his departure, until 6 pm Sunday evening. Such incidents were not uncommon. Others who were rushed to the borders to receive medical attention in Jordan were delayed up to 16 days. Currently, Yasser is in the ICU in the Arab Center, where his heart has been stabilized. But the fatal mistake from his well intentioned friend of pressing his heart had deprived the brain

of oxygen for 10 minutes, making Yasser's case a tragedy.

It is difficult to specify which is the greater humanitarian crime—the violence itself or the denial of proper medical care. It is our responsibility as a community to step aside from the politics and address the humanitarian aspect. "It would be so easy for Chirac to bring a plane and take 20 of those who were injured to France," states Mohammed. However, before we appeal to countries such as France we must question our own region. King Hussein was the only Arab leader to open the doors of his nation's hospitals to those wounded. As a result, the inevitable questions lurk over the thousands of Palestinians who were injured during the Aqsa War: Where is the other Arab nations sympathy? Where did their responsibility go? Has Arab solidarity become a long lost myth? ■

Survivor recounts story of 36 hours under the rubble

Continued from page 1

Fawzi, whose uncle owned the apartment, were looking over a bedroom when Miksche heard her mother calling out from the living room.

"I heard my mother call my name, but by the time I came around the corner all I saw was a wall coming down in front of us," Miksche recounted, her voice trembling. "Then the ceiling fell and the lights went out and we were stuck, back-to-back, in a very small space."

Miksche, who says she never liked tight places, recalled that she was trapped under a fallen ceiling and broken window glass that covered her legs and waist. But she and her friend were lucky: They just happened to be in a corridor that did not collapse fully.

Miksche said she could reach Fawzi but not see her. That is how they spent the next day and a half. "It was dark, it was black," the teen recalled. She tried picking up a shard of glass to claw at the rubble around her, even though she knew the effort was "impossible—I had 12 stories on top of me."

As the agonizing hours advanced, Miksche and Fawzi could hear rescuers digging overhead. They tried to get their attention, Miksche said: "We heard (a rescuer) who would come every day with a bulldozer. We tried to scream as much as we could so that he would hear us. We were so far down, though, and he was starting from the top. We knew that he wasn't coming to us for a very long time."

Besides her terror, she was thirsty, hungry and sick. An aspiring actress and model who pulled out of her California high school in 1993 after less than a semester there for independent study so she could pursue her career, Miksche had been "starving" herself for five days before to lose the weight she had picked up on vacation, she said.

Her rescue, along with that of Fawzi, was remarkable. Egyptian authorities noted, as it occurred 17 hours after any victims had been taken out of the rubble alive. Rescuers' hopes for finding any more survivors had dimmed markedly before they finally became aware of Fawzi and Miksche. Their screams had been picked up by the listening devices, and rescuers frantically dug a tunnel to them.

Fawzi, who was not buried in debris, was lifted out at 5 a.m. Two hours later, rescue workers, excavating with their hands because they worried that rubble might fall and crush Miksche, lifted her out, put her on a stretcher and rushed her to a hospital. ■

Tension heightens following murder of Arab boy

Continued from page 1

at a left-wing member of parliament Yael Dayan last week, told Israeli Television Tuesday night it was an accident. But about other incidents on his record, including his conviction for murdering an Arab man to avenge the murder of a Jew, he said: "I'm proud of those crimes."

Dayan, wearing bandages for her second degree burns, showed anonymous death threats she has received in the mail.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, the Likud Party minister who has most disappointed his party's ideological hard core, has redoubled his Shin Bet security detail in the face of what police called credible threats to his life.

Among Palestinian radicals, Islamic Jihad has announced it is attempting to mount a mass

attack in Israel like the suicide bombing it conducted in January 1995.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who was solicitous of Israel in his rhetoric for more than a year, is talking again of "jihad," or holy war—a reference he explains away with Koranic references to self-improvement, but which are understood otherwise by many in his impassioned crowds.

A few voices in power are calling on all sides to draw back from the abyss. Michael Eitan, the governing Likud Party's faction leader in parliament, said there are Hebron settlers itching for a fight with Palestinians and they should be removed before they bring a new "holocaust" on the Jewish community there. Eitan got little backing from his government or fellow coalition members.

Interior Minister Eli Suissa, who represents one of the ultra-Orthodox parties in the coalition of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, announced Tuesday he had eased licensing regulations for firearms—a move that will more than double the estimated 300,000 registered assault weapons in Jewish civilian hands.

"True, it seems strange," he said Tuesday night, acknowledging police opposition, "but in the direction I'm headed, I don't want to give everyone weapons: I want to give them to those people I can count on."

Hilmi Shousha's funeral did not halt the reverberations of the case. Sitting around a mourning table, eating handfuls of lamb and rice, friends and relatives of the dead child argued about what would happen to the Jewish settler accused in his death.

"The most that will happen is they'll detain him for a week or two," said Tarik Shousha, 25, who like other work-strapped Palestinians here has sometimes accepted employment in the settlement of Hadar Beitur. ■

Peace process founders as Hebron talks hit impasse

Continued from page 1

day night after the Palestinian leader's cousin died and he cancelled all meetings. But it was nearly 2 a.m. before formal talks resumed because Israeli soldiers delayed chief Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas at the Erez crossing linking the self-ruled Gaza Strip with Israel.

For the fourth time in five days, the two sides worked until dawn in an unsuccessful sprint to finish their work.

The severity of the impasse, after the night's small dramas, remained unclear. Both parties are fond of brinkmanship, and Monday's disgruntled remarks by Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were no worse than many such made when Arafat was bargaining with Labor Party prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres.

But there is little evidence this time that the two sides share the sense of common purpose that helped them bridge their previous differences. Netanyahu came to power on the strength of his relentless attacks on the

accords signed by his predecessors, and he is avowedly more suspicious of Arafat. The Palestinians doubt Netanyahu's promises to live up to Israel's signed obligations and to negotiate in good faith on the fundamental differences—over Palestinian statehood, boundaries, Jerusalem and other matters—that the two sides left for last.

Participants in the secret talks said the principal issue still dividing them is the armament to be carried by Palestinian police who are slated to take control of some four-fifths of Hebron. In the accord signed months ago—never put in effect—assigned them 100 assault rifles and 200 pistols. Netanyahu is demanding the rifles be confined to police barracks. Such Israeli claim was denied by Palestinian officials.

The disagreement has practical and symbolic importance to both sides. Netanyahu is under pressure from his core constituents to show he is improving the security provisions of last year's accord, and he does not want a repeat of September's firefights with uniformed Pales-

tinians. Arafat, for whom Hebron's militant precincts are a political weak spot, is said to believe he can afford neither the loss of prestige nor firepower in policing the city.

Hebron is a cradle of extremism for Jews and Muslims alike, and more blood has been shed over the Ibrahim Mosque than any other disputed holy site. Some 400 Jewish settlers live among 100,000 Palestinians, and under last year's accord Israel is supposed to keep control of one-fifth of the city to ensure their security.

It is the details of that agreement that remain elusive. In recent days the two sides have worked out many of the procedures for joint rapid-response teams that will work in Palestinian-controlled neighborhoods against suspected terrorists and in Israeli-governed neighborhoods to resolve disputes among Palestinians. They have also agreed on issues such as building restrictions in Palestinian neighborhoods near the Jewish settlers.

There remain differences, according to the negotiators, over the circumstances in which Israel may send forces unilaterally to Palestinian neighborhoods, which Netanyahu's government calls "hot pursuit" but means preemptive measures as well. The two sides do not agree, either, on whether Israel will reopen Shuhada Street, a principal downtown thoroughfare it closed because it passes Beit Hadassah, of the buildings inhabited by Jewish settlers.

But senior American officials said Ross worked out "understandings" on those matters in his last round of shuttling Sun-

day between Netanyahu in Haifa and Arafat in Gaza City.

In their public remarks, the two leaders traded accusations Monday, but both were notably restrained.

"I am sorry to say that although Mr Dennis Ross had worked hard with us in the last few days... still the Israeli side is putting new conditions every day—every day new conditions," Arafat said upon his arrival in Oslo.

Netanyahu, speaking to reporters, said the differences had been reduced to "fewer than the fingers on one hand," and "the thing that is causing the delay at this moment is the absence of a decision or the absence of an order from the highest level on the Palestinian side for the delegation to complete this thing."

American officials interviewed Monday said Arafat appears to think he has Netanyahu on the defensive in world opinion and is in no hurry to finish the talks. But they also said, as one put it, Netanyahu's team is still "learning to understand Palestinian sensitivities."

If the Netanyahu government is seeking to protect its constituencies, so is Arafat. The redeployment in Hebron was supposed to take place last March but was delayed by the former government after Palestinian terror bombings killed some 60 Israelis.

Netanyahu opposes the land-for-peace track on which the Oslo accords were based. While campaigning for the job he now holds, Netanyahu accused the Labor government of giving away too much without ensuring security for the Israeli people. He has denounced the Oslo accords, but then pledged to live up to Israel's commitments.

Hebron was reported calm Monday. But in the nearby village of Hussan, Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and rubber bullets at Palestinian stone-throwers after a Jewish settler was detained for the death of a Palestinian boy killed Sunday by a blow to the head. (See related story) ■

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Survivor's story of 36 hours under the rubble

Continued from p. 1

Fawzi, who owned the house, was looking for his son when he heard the sound of a hammer. He went out and found his son, who was trapped under the rubble. Fawzi called his name and his son came out. Fawzi said, "I hope you like our food!"

Jahel Rifai/Ad Dastour

At the end of the lecture, there was an extended discussion during which The Prince answered various questions. The lecture was attended by a number of Arab and foreign ambassadors at the Czech Republic, the delegation accompanying his Royal Highness and interested people.

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JORDAN WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar



I hope you like our food!

Jahel Rifai/Ad Dastour

Snatched infant returned after nation-wide campaign

An infant, who was snatched just after birth, was returned to her parents sound and well. It appeared later that the baby girl had been taken from hospital by a mother who already had six children. In the case of the more the merrier, or one more mouth wouldn't hurt. Apparently not. The woman, who can only be said as abducting the baby girl, was ashamed to tell her kin that she wasn't pregnant after all. Snatching the girl was one way. She took the infant over two weeks ago and even gave her a name. The infant was only after a nation-wide media campaign spurred on by television that the woman confessed to her mistake and returned the daughter to her rightful parents. The daughter has now been named Iman.

Going down!

We can safely say that the telecommunications people are a nice lot. Not only is the Telecommunications Corp. (TCC) has been updating its telephone systems throughout the country, it now wants to streamline our telephone bills. It will cost 41 fils per minute to speak to anyone in any governorate. This could indeed be good news for any of those who can't put the phone down. That's generous indeed! What's even better is that the TCC has agreed to lower the price of international calls by about 20 percent per minute. Of course, the bad news is that we have to wait till early next year to benefit from such decreases.

Fouad Hussein is freed

At last Fouad Hussein was set free last week. After more than two months in custody, the journalist, was released on bail of JD 20,000 by the State Security Court (SSC). Mr Hussein, who is responsible for the Liberties Committee in the Jordan Press Association, was taken into questioning last August in connection with the bread riots that occurred in Karak. He later said that he was held for over 70 days with no logical reason. Mr Shammah Al Majali was also released on bail after more than two months. He was also implicated with the Karak riots. Another journalist who was taken in custody recently was given bail of JD 20,000. Nahed Hattar, a columnist, was set free by the SSC. He was taken into custody for writing material that was considered against national unity.

Traffic congestion in Zerga

This week we are off to Zerga! The municipality has started doing something about traffic congestion in the city. It is now building a short tunnel between the Al Hussein Camp and the main center. The pedestrian tunnel, built under two roads, is no more than a 100 meters in length. But "Zergasians" are already criticizing it for both the cost, which is estimated at JD 120,000 and for the inconvenience it is creating. Zerga today, or that part of the city, is full of traffic diversions and congestion. With a backlog of cars, hooting and cursing at just about anything. The municipality is adamant however. It says that short-term inconvenience would be a price to pay for a short-term bliss. The tunnel is just part of a wider plan that the municipality is embarking on.

Hooligans brought to justice!

The hooligans in the Wihdat-Feisal football match are being taken to court to face charges of rioting, disturbing the peace and creating havoc in the Sports City. After the match, youths were rounded up by the police for questioning. Most of those have been released from custody. However, 20 youths will be charged for misdemeanors.

Drunk driving involved in accident

A 27 year-old man was run over by a car, and then left on the Sero Road. After a car chase, the driver was caught in a state of inebriation. After undergoing a breathalyzer test, the man was found to be way over the limit, in effect totally drunk. Meanwhile the man that was run over had to be rushed into hospital, the doctors describing him as in critical condition. Drunk driving is not a subject that we much talk about. As with the case above, it does occur and drunk drivers should get the maximum penalty of the law.

Public vehicle inspection this week

A campaign to make sure that road vehicles are in a safe condition and road worthy is starting Saturday 2 November. The police will wave down any type of vehicle on the road and inspect it for safety and technical procedures. The police stresses that no immediate fines will be imposed. The purpose of the campaign is to make sure that cars, buses, trucks are in ship-shapped condition for the start of the winter season. After inspection, the police gives the driver a week to put things right. If this is not done, the driver will be fined. Officers are looking for such things as windscreen wipers, front and back lights, indicators, reflectors, making sure that the number plates are seen properly, mirrors and tyres. They will also examine the car heaters and brakes. Those who have stickers on the back window of their cars will be forced to take them off. Vehicles which have been checked will have a sticker stuck on their front screen so that it is not stopped again. The campaign will start at 6:30 am on Saturday morning.

Journalism skill among children

A three-day training workshop on the "Development of Journalism Skills Among Children" will be held today, Thursday, 31 October in the Haya Center in Shemisi. The event is being organized by the Building for the Future Forum and Unesco. Thirty children from the Governorates of Amman, Balqa, Zerga and Madaba, will participate in the venue that will end on 2 November. Children will be taught how to write feature articles, conduct interviews and how to communicate effectively.



The Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti receives Mr Faisal Hussein at the Prime Ministry, Sunday. Mr Kabarti told Mr Hussein, who is in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio, that Jordan will not spare any effort in supporting the Palestinians, both in their negotiations with the Israelis and in building Palestinian national institutions.

In a Prague speech Prince Hassan stresses importance of dialogue for a better future

Prague (Petra)—"The first important area of commonality is historical experience. From 1948 to 1989, the Czech people endured the ravages of totalitarian rule. But in a historic act of self-affirmation a time when history itself seemed to be speeding up, you freed yourselves from the shackles of totalitarianism and chartered a new course in the world." His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said in the lecture he delivered at the Bohemian Foundation, Monday.

The Prince added "in the Middle East, it has been the Arab-Israeli conflict that shackled our peoples, our vision, our creative drive. My region has experienced a major war in every decade since 1948. Conflict has indeed been a kind of totalitarianism, for it filtered through in every aspect of our lives. It prevented us from developing in a normal and healthy way, stunting our growth and sapping our resources. The division of fear and mistrust it caused led both sides to develop a fortress mentality."

The Prince said that we, in the Middle East, have our doubts and concerns about the future particularly when setbacks do occur.

And just as Czechs have on occasion felt something akin to nostalgia for the certainties of the old days, so have we in Jordan sometimes missed the simplicity of having clearly defined enemies on whom to blame all our problems.

"But in both our cases, the hesitation is momentary. For we both know deep within ourselves that the ways of the past did not work. We both realize that new ways are needed if we are to enjoy a better future. And new ways are what we are both discovering", Prince Hassan said.

"But it would seem that being a small nation in the heart of a volatile region inclines one towards moderation and the Middle ground. For both of our basic philosophies attach great importance to open dialogue, to peaceful accommodation and to the cardinal principle of tolerance. This is more than a posture or a stance; it is a habit of mind, a way of doing things." It is, as the Prince described "as the essence of the Czech and Jordanian temperaments."

Prince Hassan concluded by saying



that the basis of the Jordanian world-view is the ongoing willingness of all our citizens to engage in dialogue.

"This stems from our Islamic heritage, which commands dialogue, both within a community and with other different communities.

At the end of the lecture,

Islamic museum opens in Jordan

AMMAN—Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities recently opened a uniquely Islamic museum at King Abdullah Mosque in Amman, the supervisor of the ministry's exhibition section Rashed Awadh said Sunday.

King Abdullah's mosque was chosen as the location of the museum being a distinguished Islamic landmark. The mosque contains exhibitions of the Hashemite maintenance of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and that of the mosques and shrines of the prophet's companions. It also possesses an Islamic library, Mr Awadh pointed out.

Antique pieces from different Islamic ages in Jordan have been collected and classified in the museum. A copy of prophet Muhammad's letter to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, of which the original is kept with His Majesty King Hussein, a number of pottery pieces and metal coins and a photograph of the tree under which prophet Muhammad rested during his trip to Syria are shown in this museum.

An identification in both Arabic and English has been written for all exhibited items, in addition to a documentation about the different Islamic ages: the age of the prophet, the Rashidi, the Umayyad, the Abbasside, Memluhi, Ayyoubide and Hashemite ages. Awadh said.

Hebronites fear outcome

Continued from page 1

Hebron.

He warns that Jewish settlers may carry out acts that could jeopardize the peace process and lead to another massacre. Al Shobaki believes that the conviction of Baruch Goldstein, the perpetrator of the last Ibrahim Mosque massacre in Hebron, has not changed the extremist beliefs that are held by many Israelis.

Rafiq Al Natsheh, another member of the PLC and head of the Hebron Cultural Club, says that "The people of Hebron won't accept the Israeli plan to divide the city. They have been always against the peace agreements with Israel,

Two years after the treaty The fruits that were never reaped



AMMAN (Star)—Two years have passed since Jordan has signed a peace treaty with Israel. Yet for many on this side of the divide the fruits of peace are yet to come—indeed, nobody is today talking about the fruits. The excitement, the sense of direction, the new sense of beginning, which had characterized the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty on 26 October 1994 quickly faded away. The fruits of peace which Jordanians were constantly reminded of became an embarrassment, something that we had to wait for and indeed bargain for from the powers that be, the Americans, the Europeans, the Japanese, and the Gulf States. In this respect the Amman Economic Summit that took place one year later proved an exercise in international diplomacy rather than achieving practical economic realities to Jordan and the region.

Jordanians became irritated. Later on they were joined by the government. Indeed, officials here and there began to let it slip that Jordan was getting fed up, tired of waiting for what was promised. Signing peace with Israel was supposed to make the lot of the working man much better, but this certainly didn't happen. Indeed with rising unemployment, stagnation of wages and increasing cost of living, the lot of the working man was getting worse off.

To top it all, a strain in relations between Jordan and Israel was becoming apparent. It became more focused with the election of the new right-wing Likud government in Israel last May and the opening of a tunnel under the Al Aqsa mosque.

Today relations are argued by observers to be at the lowest ebb because of Israeli failing to honor articles of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

Israel has not honored its water commitments to Jordan as specified in article six of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty which says that the former must receive 50 million cubic meters of water from the latter. This has not happened. It is fair to say however, that Jordan did receive 40 million cubic meters of water from Israel at the time of the signing of the treaty in 1994.

The issue of refugees and displaced persons is still a bone of contention between Jordan and Israel with the latter foot-dragging over the definition and terminology. Israel does not want to arrive at a definition.

On the economic front Israel continues to pussy-foot its way. It does not want either to let Jordanian goods into Israel and it wants to control Jordanian goods to enter the Palestinian National Authority areas. Indeed, what is humiliating is that Jordanian economic relations with the PNA must go via Israel which continues to impose obstacles.

It must be argued that Israel's opening of the tunnel under Al Aqsa Mosque directly affected Jordan's special role over the Holy Places, which Israel claims to respect.

Jordan does not see the peace treaty as a bilateral between two countries, but as leading to a comprehensive peace in the region. The intransigent stance by the Likud government over the Occupied Territories, and in relation to Syria and Lebanon makes such a quest for a comprehensive peace very difficult to achieve.

Consequently, the Jordanian peace camp is being influenced by internal and external angles. The former includes the opponents of the peace treaty, and the moderate elements who welcomed it. But there were even splits between the latter group which initially supported the treaty but with reservations.

While prosperity of the ailing economy was the goal behind the signing of the treaty, many Jordanians believe that it served Israeli interests as foreign investments came in droves. In 1995 alone, Israel received \$5 billion. The other challenge comes from other Arab countries, some of whom used to hammer Jordanian officials for their warm relations with Israel. But these officials soon cooled down the pace of normalization with Israel, with the warm peace turning into a tipped one.

While Jordan considers peace as a strategic option, it may not continue to play the role of the gentleman while Israel remains defiant to already agreed principals of peace.

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LURIE'S WORLD



Premier Rabin following in his own footsteps

Our Say...

Giving protection to Palestinians

APART FROM being a cold-blooded murder, the death of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy at the hands of an Israeli settler near Husan in the West Bank this week deserves more than words of condemnation and denunciation.

The brutal death of Hilmi Shousha and the fact that his murderer may be set free for lack of evidence or be reprimanded as is usually the case when a Jewish settler kills a Palestinian, brings to light the issue of protecting Palestinians from their occupiers and Israel's human rights violations in the Occupied Territories.

Shousha's murder is not the first nor will it be the last. In fact under the racist government of Benjamin Netanyahu, Jewish extremists make no attempt to hide their deep-seated hatred for the Arabs and their intention to hunt down Palestinians wherever they find them. Their threats are not empty rhetoric and the list of innocent Palestinians who were gunned down by fanatic settlers or trigger happy soldiers in Hebron, Nablus, Husan and other Palestinian towns and villages grows every month.

Against such stark violations of international laws and conventions, Palestinian demand for international protection is both urgent and legitimate. This is particularly true now, since tension between settlers and Palestinians is increasing while negotiators try in vain to find a solution to the fate of 400 Jewish settlers residing illegally in the heart of Hebron. Those settlers, armed to the teeth and relying on the backing and sympathy of an extremist government, will resort to every way possible to derail any agreement on redeploying Israeli troops in Hebron.

But with Israel's continued rejection of a third party involvement in the way it runs the Occupied Territories, Palestinians will continue to be denied the right to international protection for an interim phase. While the United States has failed to affect Israel's policy in these territories, the Europeans and the United Nations must move to redress the imbalance and side with the victims.

This is why we see the recent appointment of an EU special envoy to the Middle East as a modest step on the road of bringing pressure to bear on the Israeli government which appears to encourage the persecution of Palestinian civilians by rewarding their attackers and arming them.

We hope the role of the EU special envoy will be expanded to include providing regular reports to the EU and international organizations on the status of Palestinians under Israeli occupation. This includes threats to their lives, demolition of houses, expropriation of Arab land, expansion of illegal settlements, closure of borders, denying prisoners their basic human and legal rights and other violations of laws and conventions.

The EU, which strives to have a role in the Middle East process, must tie its economic and political relations with Israel to findings by its special envoy. It's a small step on the road of protecting the Palestinians, but it is a much needed step. Without such steps killers like the settler who murdered Hilmi Shousha will walk free as national heroes of Israel. ■



● Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak meets the leader of the Israeli Labor Party, Mr. Shimon Peres, in Sharm Al Shikh, Sunday. Mr. Mubarak warned that "if there is no peace something terrible will happen" in the region.

Europe's role in ME could be marred by internal differences

FORTY YEARS ago, Britain and France launched a joint endeavour in the Middle East. The result was the Suez affair, a debacle which did severe damage in the interest of both states in the Arab World.

Britain saw its future in a secure alliance with the United States; France set out to secure its own role in the world. The other principal result of Suez was that both states lost influence in the Middle East, leaving the United States the undisputed dominant Western power.

Now there is a chance that Europe can start to recover a role in the Middle East. The uncertain focus of the United States, growing convergence between Paris and London and the desire of Arab states for a counter-weight to Washington all point in the same direction. But this will only work if the Europeans can overcome their own internal divisions; and that means London and Paris working in tandem once more.

President Jacques Chirac's visit to the Middle East is a concrete demonstration of the will in France to reassert Europe's role. British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind will go out next month. Both Britain and France feel that at a time when the Middle East peace process is in such a desperately poor condition, when the United States seems to have its eye off the ball, there is an opportunity.

The United States is (to put it politely) ambivalent about the European intervention in the Middle East. But warnings are coming out from Washington.

It is true that the European Union's past attempts to put itself forward as a regional partner have been largely unsuccessful, even embarrassing at times. At the Madrid peace conference in 1992 delegates were presented with the unedifying spectacle of a senior EU commissioner edging his chair across the floor in an attempt to get a seat at the table. James Baker, the US secretary of state, told him that he had enough to deal with in the world without the Europeans.

But if the EU's political efforts have

come to little, the economic and financial influence of the EU in the region is considerable. Europe's political weight is bound to increase. It is just a question of how that materialises, and to what end it is put.

There are other trends that point to the fact that Europe will play a larger role. The lack of focus in the United States is not just a temporary, election-related phenomenon: a coherent, long-term foreign policy is harder to maintain now that the Cold War is over. The solidity of the pro-Israel lobby in the US has been badly shaken by Benjamin Netanyahu; it is even suggested that US support for Israel is a thing of the past.

In any case, the rapid changes in the international environment have reduced Russian influence in the area and strengthened American power in the region. Russia's forays into the Middle East were not notably successful and they largely came to a halt with the end of the Soviet Union. Moscow is no longer a reliable and resourceful ally for Damascus (if it ever was); hence the great warmth with which Chirac was welcomed when he arrived.

The post-Soviet American hegemony in the Middle East was always bound to be a temporary phenomenon. Europe and the Middle East are neighbours, and Europe has significant interests in seeing peace take root on the other side of the Mediterranean, just as Middle Eastern states (including Israel) have a strong interest in open markets in Europe.

Hitherto, one obstacle to a successful European role has been the rather unseemly squabbling between the Europeans themselves. Both the British



King Hussein and President Chirac in Parliament, during the latter's visit to Jordan

and French foreign services believe that they have a historical role to play in the Arab world, though sadly it is not the same historical role.

Britain, despite the retreat from East of Suez in 1971, still exercises a residual political and military role in the region. It has close ties with Israel and with several of the Arab states, notably Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. It sees itself as playing a balancing role, neither pro-Arab nor pro-Israeli. France has kept close relations with its former colonial possessions, notably Syria and Lebanon, as well as its links with the Maghreb countries. It believes it can be a counter weight to the US and tends to lean in favour of the Arab states.

Several factors have combined to erode, if not erase, these Anglo-French tensions. France is on its way back into

NATO: Britain is distinctly less servile to the Americans than it used to be. Europe, too, is getting its act together, and a new plan for joint foreign policy is one of the few suggestions that Britain can accept in the draft treaty on European Union being discussed in Brussels. London and Paris work together far more closely on intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism and military matters. But the two still compete against each other for arms contracts, oil and influence.

That is an argument for more coordination, and the EU is the place to do that. Nor can either France or Britain ignore the interests and desires of Germany, the EU's paymaster and a state with its own emergent policies in the Middle East.

The Independent

Bookless in Gaza

By Edward W. Said

LAST MONTH I learned through a friend that two of my books were being picked up and confiscated from West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem bookstores by Yasser Arafat's security men. My first reaction was incredulity, so I asked my friend Ibrahim Abu-Lughod to try to get me more information.

Three days later, he rang me back to say that a book-seller in Ramallah had told him 10 copies had been removed by order of the Ministry of Information. I have known the Minister, Yasser Arafat, for about 15 years, so I asked Ibrahim to call him directly about the matter. Ibrahim told me that Arafat had professed complete ignorance on the matter. To date, no one has accepted responsibility for the ban and confiscations, which continue.

Over the days since those first calls, I have heard from other friends and sources that the two books being confiscated—both in Arabic and both compilations of my bi-weekly pieces in *Al Hayat* that include three *Nation* articles as well—had in fact made some impression on my readers in the West Bank and Gaza. I had already been a nonperson to the Palestinian media, although in March, while visiting my son in Ramallah, I was surprised that a 20 radio broadcast on the Voice of Palestine was dedicated to attacking me.

Arafat, I know, has been greatly angered by my persistent critique not only of the Oslo accords and what I believe to have been a fraudulent (so far as Palestinians are concerned) peace process, but also of his increasingly dictatorial, profoundly corrupt and visionless attempt to rule his people.

I always point out that he is not president but, in effect, the Israeli enforcer of the military occupation by other means. I regard him, therefore, as a Pétain figure who has taken advantage of his people's exhaustion and kept himself in power by conceding virtually everything significant about our political and human rights. What he did after he came to Gaza in July 1994 has worsened the effects of the 29-year occupation (which still continues), and over the months I have reminded my readers, of whom he seems to have been one, that cronyism, a huge security apparatus, kowtowing to the Israelis, buying people off and torturing, imprisoning or killing dissidents at will, are not the

ways to establish a new polity for our people.

Like every dictator and petty despot before him, Arafat thinks that by confiscating books, banning articles and imprisoning or murdering people who seem too independent, he can blot out dissent and dissatisfaction. I have always tried to act on the principle that intellectuals must try to change reality and be said

critical of power, not accommodate it. Yet so far—and I am not speaking here about the banning of my books—there has been an extraordinary Palestinian *trahison des clercs*, and I simply cannot understand why.

Why does nationalism, and a primitive nationalism at that, suddenly shut off all the appeals to universal values that we had used so bravely



in the past? The problem for Palestinian intellectuals is that too few of us have had the courage to speak up.

That is a widespread problem in the Arab world, where I believe the press and the media generally are uniquely compromised. In most Arab countries, it is legally impossible to criticize the ruler or a member of his family.

What is truly startling is

the uniform obduracy of these regimes.

They have so far succeeded in maintaining a cowed silence among otherwise outspoken activists, writers and intellectuals. So there is a two-way relationship here that must be broken, I believe. And if it means doing it—opening up a debate—from the outside, then so be it.

A debate is exactly what Arafat does not want. In the Legislative Assembly recently he petulantly refused to allow further discussion of the proposed Constitution (which already gives him an egregious amount of power) and said that the Constitution was an "executive"—not parliamentary—issue.

In late August, a brave deputy, Ziad Abu Amr, raised in the Parliament the matter of the book-banning, and it is slated for discussion soon. That is an important development. But Arafat's view at present is, I believe, to rule without question and to try either to efface, humiliate or circumvent any challenge to his tattered authority. I say "tattered" because, despite flying around in two ancient Egyptian helicopters, he must always be monitored by his

Israeli masters in a third.

The situation very much resembles the one portrayed by Gabriel Garcia Marquez in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. The man scarcely knows the difference between reality and illusion, and were it not for the cruelty with which he treats his dependent cronies and hangers-on, the situation would be comic.

I hope that, as a result of this censorship, there will be more candid and accurate discussion of the peace process. Mostly, the Western media have behaved scandalously, accepting the hyperbole and cant of the Americans and the Israelis and their Arab clients; they have neither read the texts of the Oslo agreements nor looked at the situation on the ground, in which Palestinians are now oppressed by Israelis and by a sort of Israeli-imposed enforcer—a situation that Benjamin Netanyahu will make a good deal worse. But my larger hope is that more Palestinian writers and intellectuals will begin to engage in the kind of questioning and challenge that our situation so desperately requires. ■

Nation

Letters to the Editor

In defence of Hebron

To the Editor,

With all people in our area who crave peace, I watch the nightly news and read the newspapers for progress in the "peace process." I completely agree with the PNA that in order to achieve peace the settlers must be removed especially from Hebron. In this regard, however one glaring omission constantly surprises me.

In most discussion of the Hebron problem no mention is made at least publicly of the fact that the Jewish settlement (like all the others) is illegal. It began as a criminal trespass by a group of American Jewish "tourists" who checked into a Hebron hotel and were accepted as temporary guests in good faith by the Arab proprietors. When they refused to leave instead of being handcuffed and sent to jail for trial on charges of criminal trespass or even being deported, they were instead protected by the [Israeli army], the rightful owners of the hotel evicted.

In the ensuing years they have expanded their illegal enclave from which they make periodic forays to the local mosque for massacres, and they have displaced the shopkeepers in this important market centre at the West Bank to which all the local farmers bring their

grapes and other produce for sale.

My ancestors lost their land years ago in Ireland. If I were to travel to their original town, check into a hotel, refuse to leave, and regularly murder my neighbors, I would expect to be tried for criminal trespass and murder.

By what collective insanity has the world come to view the Jewish settlers in Hebron as somehow privileged or protected by divine sanction? If this is "religious," it is time for such abuse of religion to be unmasked for what it is: the rape murder and pillage of the colonial settler state, that has been discredited in most of the world, including South Africa.

Dr. A. Clare Brandabur
An American teaching in Jordan

Congratulations on women article

To the Editor,

I would like to congratulate *The Star* staff on the good content and breadth of articles they are offering to the Internet community. One excellent recent article: "Violence against women: Myth or reality?" (*The Star* 10 October) was exceptional I thought because it focuses on an area nobody dares to talk about in our society, at least so far. It is not only well written but it is also very straightforward with good revealing numbers

and testimonies.

Yet at the same time it is well balanced and not biased in any way while flowing nicely and logically to a fair conclusion.

Hopefully we can keep on reading *The Star* on the Internet, it is definitely a nice way to start a day, once a week at least.

Thaer Barakat, (MIS Manager)
access@aracnet.com
Organization: The Prudential North-west

Savior and peaceful nations!

To the Editor,
I fully agree with Carrie Nello Moya about the interests of the US in Operation Desert Storm (*The Star*, 10 October). The correspondent very correctly puts it regarding rescue of a small nation. Another event to be given a thought is the recent "activity" in the Gulf where the US wishes to revive its reputation as "The Savior" and keep its interests alive. If The Savior was really the savior, there will be some peaceful nations called Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc., etc. on the globe!

Mohammad Ali Khan
"nwigbah@batalco.com.bh"
@batalco.com.bh Norwich Wintertur

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Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

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Managing Editor

Dr Marwan Al Asmar

Editorial Team

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Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

Business scene

The import and export cargo volume via the Aqaba port during the month of August was 951,000 tons. However, in last July imports and exports through Aqaba were 1,132,9 tons. This decline is attributed to the decrease in Potash exports. During July, potash exports were 239,000 tons compared with only 92,000 tons in August.

Over the first eight months of this year, the volume of Jordan's imports from the United States rose by 35% compared to the same period last year. These totalled JD 233 million against JD 171.5 million. Official statistics reveal that Jordan's imports from the US included vegetable and animal oils, grain (JD 61 million), sugar and cereals. Jordanian exports to the United States over the same period reached JD 9.5 million compared with JD 7.5 million last year. Garments and related products ranked first totalling JD 6.237 million, against JD 4.294 million in the same period last year. No fertilizers were exported this year compared to last year's exports of JD 20 million.

The Industrial Cities Corp. and the Global Company organized a seminar at Al Hassan Industrial city titled "Utilization of the Internet for Industrial Purposes." The director of the corporation, Mr. Asem Al Hindawi introduced the topic. The seminar fully explained the workings of the Internet, its international dimension and how Jordanian industry can benefit.

The National Aid Fund is to provide assistance to those wanting to embark on wheat and barley projects. The beneficiaries will be given JD 500 loans for each project. The first stage covers more than 40 projects. A source at the Ministry of Social Development said that the ministry is still receiving applications from those interested. These are being studied according to their feasibility before getting final approval.

Japan is to give 41,700,000 Japanese yen (\$400,000) to the Dept. of Agriculture. Over the last few years, Japan has provided aid worth between \$25,000-\$500,000 for the Radio and Television Corp., The Amman Great Municipality Library, the Ministry of Youth and the Royal Cultural Center.

Economic experts assess Jordanian-Israeli economic relations

Israel also made use of the peace climate to restore its international relations, as many countries such as India and China paved the way for diplomatic and economic ties with Israel, Dr Hamarneh says.

AMMAN (Star)—This week marks the second anniversary of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty which was signed in 26 October 1994, and followed by other agreements related to trade, exchange, transport, tourism and investments.

It is evident that the Jordanian-Israeli economic relations are not moving as fast as expected. Though some commercial exchange has been achieved, they are limited because of long-winded Israeli procedures and restrictions. Israel makes it conditional that priority be given to security before any commercial dealings are normalized. However, Jordan wants to fully cooperate and implement the agreements.

Dr Tayseer Abdel Jabir, an economic analyst, says that bilateral agreements have been signed and agreed upon since the treaty was signed. He added that these relate to many fields such as trade exchange, transport, aviation, tourism, agriculture, science, culture,

post and telecommunications. "By setting up the legal framework for Jordanian-Israeli relations we expect that such relations will revive, particularly in the fields of commerce, tourism and joint ventures in the Jordan Valley and Aqaba," he added.

The Jordanian economy should benefit from these agreements provided that the Palestinian market is opened up to Jordanian products, Dr Jabir continued.

Unfortunately, the implementation of these agreements was much below our expectations, he maintained. The volume of trade between Jordan and Israel was marginal. Moreover, trade exchange between Jordan and Palestine was not as much as we hoped, because of Israeli obstacles on the free movement of products in the region.

Tourism witnessed a remarkable increase in the beginning. However, Jordanians faced increasing restrictions espe-

cially in obtaining visas. Royal Jordanian (RJ) benefited from the shorter flight route to Europe and the United States, by being allowed to pass through Israel and Palestine. This saves RJ time and fuel expenses, but it is suffering losses as the Israeli airline Al Al is selling tickets at cheap prices.

Joint ventures of the private sector in the two countries are limited due to the length of time required to conduct economic feasibility studies.

Jordanian and Palestinian labor is also an issue. They can replace foreign manpower in Israel at the present time. But Israel remains reluctant to issue licenses to Jordanians and Palestinians to work inside Israel, Dr Jabir says.

Israeli hardline policy and its mentality blocked the way for further economic cooperation and co-ordination. Israel has to reevaluate its position if it is to benefit effectively from the peace agreements, Dr Al Jabir

concluded.

But others are arguing exactly the opposite. Dr Munir Hamarneh, an economics professor at The University of Jordan says that Israel was the main, if not the sole, beneficiary from the agreements at least on the economic level.

This is because the Arab boycott was either completely or partially lifted as a number of Arab countries established economic ties with Israel. Israel also made use of the peace climate to restore its international relations, as many countries such as India and China paved the way for diplomatic and economic ties with Israel, Dr Hamarneh says.

Israel managed to attract a lot of foreign investments while Arab countries received very little.

In addition, the economic regional summits have helped Israel to promote its economic relations on the global arena.

Israel was keen to achieve the steps of economic and political normalization with the Arab world before completing the final stage of the peace process. The latest Israeli measures adopted by the Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu aim at reversing the previous peace accords and insist on the principle of peace for security instead of land for peace.

Such mentality makes it difficult to speak about joint economic achievements in the area. Previous plans on economic cooperation have been delayed, as Jordanian businessmen decided to boycott joint projects with Israelis and refused to participate in the regional council for development. What is necessary is to stop all forms of economic rela-

tions with Israel to force Netanyahu to adhere to international resolutions, Dr Hamarneh said.

But again others differ in their analysis. Mr Mutei Al Kabarti, the chairman of the Jordanian Money Exchanger's Association, said that Jordan achieved some economic and political progress after the signing of the peace treaty with Israel.

Jordan restored its lands and its water stake in the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers in addition to its equity from Lake Tiberias lake (about 50 million cubic meters), he says.

Also, about \$1 billion of its debts were written off, other debts were re-scheduled for longer grace periods at low interest rate in order to support the dinar.

As stability and security is closely linked to the investment climate in the Kingdom, the increase of tourists who visited the country has led to a noticeable increase in the tourism sector. This created more job opportunities and boosted the tourism services in the form of building more hotels and restaurants.

The Jordanian banks also benefited from the peace treaty as many of them opened branches in the West Bank and Gaza, Mr Kabarti concluded.

Business Chronicle

Jordan's membership in WTO, a step towards a new global economy

SINCE THE signing of its peace treaty with Israel two years ago, Jordan has tried its utmost to establish regional stability for a new prosperous Middle East, that can cope with the challenges of the developed world.

The move from a course of destruction towards the building of economic relations demand the establishment of a comprehensive peace.

Such a development is vital for greater integration in the world economy. The countries of the region need to play a much more dynamic role in global economic interaction. As a developing country, Jordan plays an essential role on the bilateral, regional and international levels. Last Monday, negotiations started in Geneva between Jordan and the World Trade Organization (WTO) to discuss issues related to Jordan's membership in the to the world organization.

Jordan's membership, whenever approved, will be a major step forward to link the country's economy with the worldwide one. Jordanian products and services will enter world markets at most favorable conditions and with greater weight. WTO membership will also reinforce Jordan's accredited economic commitments to its commercial partners and towards the international community.

"Entering the stage of globalization requires more commitments to liberalization," the head of the Jordanian delegation, and Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali Abul Raghib said.

Since 1989, Jordan has gone full way in its economic reform program through the liberalization of its commercial system, removing restrictions on licences and imports, opening the market for internal and external competition and adjusting economic legislations and measures in order to secure a continuing development process.

In order to face the great challenges facing the economy, a new implementation of economic and investment strategies is required to create and encourage a suitable climate for local, Arab and international investments.

Economic obstacles and burdens should be removed through enhancing the Jordanian private sector to perform its investment activity as a partner in economic and social development.

Sony's region-wide roadshow comes to Jordan

AMMAN—As part of a region-wide roadshow, Sony Broadcast & Professional, Middle East and their distributor in Jordan, Zaki A. Ghul, will unveil Digital Power Production, an all-digital, totally integrated production system for the professional market in early December 1996. Digital Power Production offers a complete "system solution" and represents a quantum leap in corporate video production. Full presentations and hands-on demonstrations will be on offer.

With a complete line-up of digital equipment, Sony is offering the market an entirely new concept in digital video production and post production. The new system is designed for "real world" applications so video producers can integrate broadcast, professional and consumer equipment as needed.

The new system cost-effectively offers enhanced flexibility and productivity with superior video/audio quality and can be integrated with existing analogue, digital consumer and digital broadcast equipment.

"Sony is offering a unique vision to the production professional with the introduction of our complete digital system approach," said Andrew Thornton, general manager, Sony Broadcast and Professional, Middle East. "This is not about a format introduction. It marks the launch of a totally integrated, fully digital production system that specifically addresses the needs of a market demanding high performance, easy-to-use, cost-effective systems offering a migration path towards digital systems."

"The signal remains entirely digital from acquisition through to presentation, offering the first truly digital solution for the markets. Maintaining full compatibility with current analogue systems and closely conforming to the consumer DV format, this hybrid digital system allows the cor-

porate video producer to build towards an all-digital production suite at his own pace. Each piece of the system is designed to work either in a totally digital environment or with existing analogue components."

As part of this complete digital system, Sony is introducing two non-linear editing systems called Edit Station, and an entire line of digital cameras, camcorders, editing desks, dockable decks and recorder players.

Sony Broadcast & Professional, Middle East has been established on shore for 13 years. The company is a leading supplier of video and audio systems and products to Broadcasters. Sony Broadcast products are in use at local and regional television stations in the Middle East. The professional products division includes state-of-the-art video conferencing, video production equipment for the corporate market, presentation and display systems as well as technology specifically developed for security, scientific and medical and leisure applications.

The Sony Corporation employs close to 140,000 people worldwide and has established an enviable reputation for its products and services. In 1995, Sony was ranked as one of the world's top three most respected brands by a survey of senior corporate executives in Fortune Magazine. In March 1996, a Harris Poll in the United States gave the company the number one position of all brands.

USAir to end British Airways code-share

ARLINGTON—USAir said that it is compelled to end its code-share relationship with British Airways from 29 March 1997 in the light of the British carrier's proposed alliance with American Airlines. USAir said that it has informed British Airways that the link between the two airlines' frequent traveller programs will end on the same month. The USAir frequent traveller program will maintain its ties to Air France, Alitalia, Sabena, Swissair, all Nippon Airways, Northwest Airlines, Qantas and the 17 Latin American members of the latipass program.

USAir has applied to the US Department of Transport to operate its own flights between London's Heathrow Airport and USAir Gateways at Boston, Charlotte, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Passengers booked to travel on code-share flights between now and 29 March are unaffected. Members of USAir's frequent traveller program also will continue to accrue miles for travel on British Airways until next 29 March 1997. All travel awards issued after 24 October and prior to 29 March will be honoured for one year from date of issue.

USAir operates almost 5,000 jets to more than 200 destinations worldwide including 39 states in the US, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Cayman Islands. European destinations include Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, and Düsseldorf.

Sanctions on Iraq mean \$120 billion loss to world economy

IRAQI MINISTER of Commerce, Mohammad Mahdi Saleh, said that because of the six-year embargo on Iraq, the world economy suffered losses of \$120 billion.

Such an amount could have contributed to developing the economy and the process of production in many states, he added.

Turkey is the most affected by the sanctions. The US, Japan and European and Arab countries are also bearing the brunt. Mr Saleh puts the responsibility on the US which insists on maintaining the embargo.

He was speaking at the opening of the Egyptian Pharmaceuticals and Food stuffs Exhibition which was held in Baghdad

recently. He said Iraq imported annually about \$20 billion before 1990 when the UN sanctions were imposed.

"As soon as the 'oil-for-food' deal with the United Nations starts, Iraq will invite foreign companies to submit their offers on a competitive basis in order to sign contracts with the Iraqi government," Mr Saleh added.

These companies include those which export wheat, rice, tea, food oil, baby milk, and other foodstuff materials stipulated in the memorandum of understanding which was signed with the United Nations.

World Bank appreciates positive steps of Jordan's restructuring program

AMMAN (Star)—The World Bank is extremely satisfied with Jordan's economic performance and its restructuring program.

This is according to the Executive Director of the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa Department, Mr. Inder Sud, who was in Amman earlier this week. He met the Prime Minister, Mr. Abdel Karim Al Kabarti, the Minister of Planning Dr. Rima Khalaf and other Jordanian officials.

The two sides discussed the results of negotiations made by the Jordanian delegation that ended in Washington early this month in the discussions during the quarterly meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Mr. Kabarti said he was satisfied with the performance of the economy, saying that the government is keen to achieve economic growth that would boost the income of Jordanians and

protect those with low income.

Mr. Sud praised the solidity of Jordan's national economy and its active movement in strengthening the infrastructure. The World Bank will continue its support to Jordan.

The per capita share of the Gross Domestic Product recorded a rise. Savings also went up together with investments and exports.

The inflation rate declined leading to positive achievements that pave the way for

further progress in Jordan economy.

Jordan, in addition, has recorded noticeable prosperity in the fields of tourism, transport, water resources, telecommunication services, promoting the role of the private sector and improving the levels of education, Mr. Sud maintained.

The World Bank has since 1962 provided financial assistance to Jordan. More than \$1.4 billion were given to Jordan in the form of loans to finance more than 55 projects, in addition to donation worth many millions of dollars.

Currently, the World Bank provides finance for many developing projects worth \$500 million, Mr. Sud said.

The general secretary in the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Mr. Bashir Al Jaghbin said that the World Bank has initially approved the finance of the fourth transport project being supervised by the ministry.

This project costs \$75 million and will be approved after a feasibility study.

The project includes establishing the ringroad around Amman at 28 kilometers length, from Sahab to Zerga.

Negotiations with the World Bank delegation who visited Jordan recently also focused on requirements of the third transport project made by the ministry. It starts from the airport road, Ras Al Naqab and Aqaba, Mr. Al Jaghbin added.

Mediterranean forum emphasizes need for regional initiatives

THE European Investment Bank's (EIB) forum "The Mediterranean Working in Partnership," which ended in Madrid recently, highlighted the need for developing regional initiatives, especially those relating to transnational projects and private sector joint ventures, in a stable political, financial and physical environment.

Financial resources exist to support sustainable development, but measures are still needed to create the basis for such development locally and regionally. The Mediterranean partnership concept has to be focused on concrete action to create prosperity for the people. To attract capital to modernize and liberalize the economies of the southern Mediterranean, it is crucial that the risk issues facing private operators and finance are solved.

EIB President, Sir Brian Unwin underlined that sustainable development can only be effective through closer partnership between all countries and economic players in the region, including an increase in co-operation between the Southern Mediterranean states.

The EIB is ready to increase the volume of its financing in the region as it seeks to complement local and international sources of finance to act as a catalyst and to help "to make things happen."

In her closing statement EIB Vice-President Ariane Obolsing emphasized that for a true working partnership amongst all operators in the region the key ingredients were a coherence of action and mutual confidence amongst all partners.

Over 380 senior government business and banking officials from more than 25 countries participated in the two-day forum.

The EIB signed loan agreements totalling ECU 80 million for projects in the Eastern Mediterranean. These included: ECU 50 million for schemes to reduce pollution in three coastal towns of Lebanon; ECU 23 million to the Palestine Authority for the first phase of the construction of the harbor of Gaza; and ECU 9 million for the restoration and rehabilitation of the water distribution network in Greater Amman.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 30 October		
	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1056	1.1111
DM	0.4628	0.4651
SEK	0.5649	0.5677
YEN	0.1370	0.1377
YEN (100)	0.6370	0.6402
DEL	0.4126	0.4147
LIT (100)	0.0466	0.0468

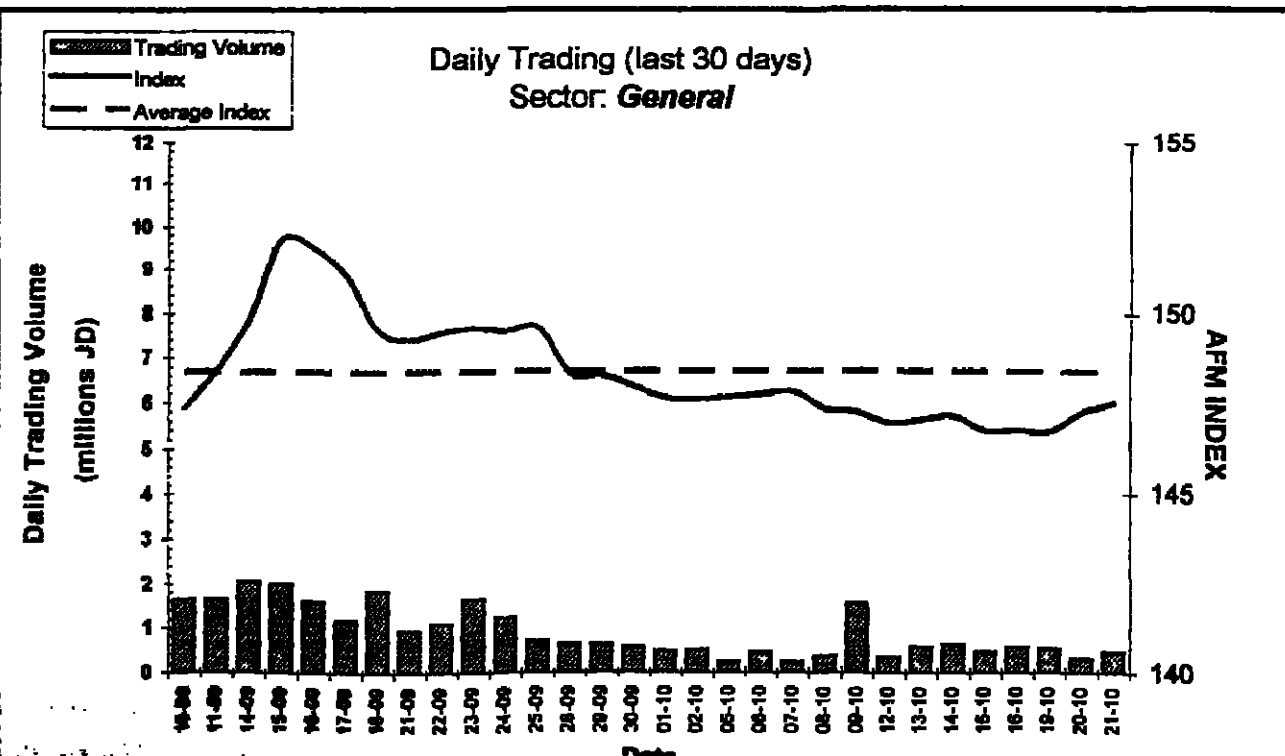
MARKET WATCH

26-30 October

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
↑ United Insurance	4.91	↑ Real Estate Investment	5.49	↑ Jordan Modern Cable	4.11	↑ Arab Insurance	2.33
↑ El-Zay Ready Wear	2.79	↑ Arab Insurance	2.44	↑ Jordan Kuwait Bank	4.92	↑ United Land Development	2.27
↑ Real Estate Investment	2.25	↑ Industry Supplies	2.17	↑ Arab Insurance	2.38	↑ Arab Electric Industry	2.13
↓ International Tourist	5.00	↓ International Tourist	5.26	↓ International Tourist	5.56	↓ International Tourist	4.71
↓ International Food Industry	5.00	↓ International Food Industry	5.23	↓ International Food Industry	5.56	↓ International Food Industry	4.71
↓ Livestock and Poultry	4.55	↓ Union Bank	5.23	↓ Pearl-ventary Paper	4.76	↓ Arab Finance Investment	4.08
General Price Pointer	148.750						
Trade Volume	371679						
Stock Volume	357481						
Highest Traded Stocks							
↑ Livestock & Poultry	67.803	↑ Cement Factory	121.634	↑ Cement Factory	236.447	↑ Calf Bank	212.768

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 446868 Fax: 446940



By David Hoffman
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

US pays Russian scientists for detailed history of nuclear program

MOSCOW—Less than a year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a group of Russia's top atomic weapons scientists agreed to sell to the United States a massive, secret study of Soviet nuclear weapons testing, providing first-hand information about Cold War events stretching over more than four decades, according to documents and interviews with key Russian participants.

The history project, which was led by Alexander Tchernyshev, a theoretical physicist at Russia's first nuclear weapons laboratory, remains shrouded in secrecy both in Russia and the United States.

But the scope of the project—a detailed, 2,000-page history of 715 Soviet nuclear tests over 41 years—is unprecedented, and appears to have given the United States valuable insights into Soviet military and scientific procedures. It could also help American specialists better prepare to monitor any future nuclear explosions by rogue states that defy a new ban on nuclear tests.

Starting in December 1992, Tchernyshev and about 200 other scientists wrote the history under contract to the US Defense Special Weapons Agency for a fee of \$288,501. At the time, the scientists were suffering economically and the United States was trying to prevent them from taking their nuclear weapons know-how elsewhere.

The information the scientists provided was the objective of a long and costly detection and monitoring effort by the United States during the Cold War. By filling in the gaps, experts said, the history will help the Pentagon better understand Russian procedures, and adjust its systems to allow better monitoring of tests in the future.

A new treaty banning all nuclear tests recently was

adopted by the UN General Assembly. But one presumed nuclear state, India, has refused to accept it, while Iran, Libya and possibly other countries reportedly continue to pursue programs to develop nuclear weapons.

According to a 10-page outline of the report, much of the work of the Russian scientists appears to have been on scientific themes, such as measurements of radioactivity and the impact of nuclear tests on the environment and people. The history did not directly delve into the design or deployment of the Soviet—and now Russian—nuclear arsenal, and would probably not affect nuclear strategy or arms control.

Tchernyshev said the Russian scientists did not divulge state secrets. However, he acknowledged that the information given the United States was "sensitive." He said all the material was screened by a Russian declassification process "and we have the documents to prove it."

The Defense Special Weapons Agency, in a written reply to questions from *The Washington Post*, said the information "was of no value in understanding the design of Soviet nuclear weapons because we did not ask for weapon design information and none was provided." Asked what was learned about Soviet testing, the agency said, "That information is classified."

According to Tchernyshev, the project was carried out with the approval and participation of Russia's powerful minister of atomic energy, Viktor Mikhailov. There is an agreement by both countries to keep most

of the work confidential. Tchernyshev said the reason for the secrecy is to deter proliferation.

The project eventually produced a 17-chapter, illustrated draft report. The Defense Special Weapons Agency, which commissioned the project, is a Pentagon unit overseeing the US nuclear stockpile. It also provides help in dismantling weapons and combating proliferation in the former Soviet Union.

Robert S. Norris, senior analyst with the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, obtained a copy of the contract and made it available to *The Washington Post*. Norris, who has tracked Soviet and American nuclear testing for a decade and who has pushed to open up more data about nuclear testing, described the Russian project as a potential "intelligence gold mine" for American policy makers.

The United States paid the scientists to write detailed chapters on the first Soviet nuclear test in 1949, which surprised American intelligence and President Truman; the testing of the first Soviet hydrogen bomb in 1953; the once ultra-secret Soviet atomic weapons testing complex; the long-hidden 1954 Tsar nuclear test involving ground troops; the environmental and radiation impact of hundreds of tests, both in the atmosphere and underground;

and on other topics, both scientific and political.

"Obviously, it would be extremely interesting from the point of view of understanding the whole Soviet nuclear weapons complex, the level of technology, how it operated, how it

took decisions, and probably understanding current issues of safety and security," said David Holloway, professor at Stanford University and author of *Stalin and the Bomb*, a history of the early Soviet nuclear effort.

Holloway said the project could have practical results, helping US experts see precisely how accurate had been their measurements of Soviet blasts, thus better calibrating future methods. If the recent UN global test ban is ratified, an elaborate worldwide monitoring system is envisioned to ensure compliance.

Tchernyshev, in recent interviews, described the history as a milestone in cooperation between former adversaries. He said the report helped clear up "incorrect and confused" information that the United States gathered during the Cold War, and showed that the Soviet Union was constantly struggling to catch up to the United States.

Tchernyshev said the project was mutually beneficial, and not simply a sale of information. "It is not just going and selling goods," he said. "We didn't mean it like that."

He added, "It was useful for all countries. It was not just a horse you sell. No matter how poor I was in 1992, I would never have agreed to that contract for money. We have something to be proud of. Both the American side and the Russian side have come a long way."

The Russian scientists were facing hard times in 1992, when the study was commissioned. Tchernyshev said the United States stipulated that the payments must be made directly to nuclear scientists, not the weapons laboratory. The 200 authors each received about \$500, he said, with the rest going for taxes and expenses. At the time, the average monthly wage in Russia was \$38. The contract ran from December 1992 to

December 1995, although Tchernyshev said the authors are still working on refining some parts.

In February 1992, barely two months after the Soviet collapse, Tchernyshev was in Washington for a conference when US officials broached the history project. After several more visits to Washington, he signed a contract in December. His trips were extraordinary because Tchernyshev, 50, who had spent his career inside the Soviet nuclear weapons complex, cannot travel abroad without permission. He is deputy scientific director for testing technology at Arzamas-16, one of the two Russian nuclear weapons laboratories.

At the time of the agreement, the first, tentative contacts between former Soviet scientists and their American counterparts were just beginning to blossom. The West was also getting a fuller view of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, including the 10 "closed cities" that were the backbone of the atomic bomb design and production system.

The scientists at Arzamas-16, almost totally dependent on the state, had been pampered. But in the early 1990s their subsidies for research were dwindling, their paychecks late and their living standards low. They lacked research materials, basic food and medical care.

The plight of the Russian atomic scientists caused alarm in the West, where it was feared that without help, they might flee Russia for lucrative jobs building nuclear weapons for Libya, North Korea or Iran. Congress reacted by approving bipartisan legislation in November 1991 to help assist the for-

mer Soviet republics in disassembling nuclear weapons and preventing their spread.

At the core of Arzamas-16 is the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics, the chief weapons-designing institute. The city also includes bomb manufacturing, disassembling and support facilities. Tchernyshev set up a small office, called the Physics Technology Center, to handle the history project.

Tchernyshev said the project bolstered the sagging morale of the atomic scientists at a time when they were beginning to feel abandoned, with declining budgets and growing problems. "This project helped us a great deal," he said. "When we were working on the project, people sensed a grand mission, and this was important, not for the Americans, for whom we were preparing the materials, but for our people." Tchernyshev said there have subsequently been other contracts between the scientists and the Pentagon.

The Arzamas-16 scientists followed a detailed plan set out by the Pentagon agency. An annex listing all 715 Soviet nuclear tests, and providing such details as their purpose and yield, was made public by the Russians this summer. A similar US list was published in 1993. Some chapters in the secret history will be published openly, after sensitive material is taken out, Tchernyshev said.

The Defense Special Weapons Agency agency refused to release any of the history because "the Russians designated the information in the document as sensitive and requested that the information not be released to anyone other than properly cleared government and government contractor employees."

Norris said if the information is not secret it should be made public. "It goes to the heart of what this is," he said. "Is it secret or not? Either these are real secrets and were an intelligence coup at bargain-basement prices—or they are not secrets."



Gen. ALEXANDER I. TCHERNYSHEV
Russian Scientist

Perils and profits of pachinko passion

By David Holley
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

TOKYO—Serene amid blaring music and the roar of steel balls clattering through hundreds of upright pinball machines, college student Aiko Takano sat happily with her boyfriend, licking a lollipop and losing money.

Takano, 19, was enjoying a Dutch-treat date at an upscale pinball parlor in Tokyo's trendy Shibuya district, and her losses neither surprised nor bothered her. She and her boyfriend play pachinko—Japanese-style pinball—about twice a week, she said, and lose about \$800 a month. Her share eats up all she earns from a part-time job as a drug-store cashier, but she keeps coming.

New players like Takano—and seasoned addicts playing for rising stakes—have triggered the industry's explosive growth in the last few years, despite Japan's worst recession since World War II.

Gross revenue has doubled since the late 1980s, according to estimates by both the government and private analysts. It has hit \$275 billion a year—more than the worldwide sales of Japan's auto industry. After winnings are returned to players through a scheme exploiting loopholes in Japan's anti-gambling laws, the industry's take is about \$36 billion.

Its machines feature flashing lights, clanging bells and gaudy plastic flowers that open up with lucky hits to catch balls, or spinning rows of numbers that spit out winners, slot-machine style.

The game provides jobs for 320,000. For most players, pachinko is a harmless

pleasure that provides emotional release from stressful lives.

But even as pachinko has assumed a heavyweight role in Japan's economy, a backlash of criticism has erupted against its negative social impacts: devastated family finances, broken marriages and highly publicized cases of unattended children dying from accidents.

Between April 1995 and June 1996, according to a survey by the mass-circulation newspaper *Mainichi Shinbun*, 30 children died while parents played pachinko.

The word "pachinkoholism" has been coined to describe the game's addicts. Among the worst: a construction worker burdened by pachinko debts who robbed a Tokyo post office, then held a two-year-old boy hostage for more than a day before surrendering to police and blaming his actions on the game.

Ironically, pachinko's transformation from a small-stakes pastime into a serious form of gambling—the key to its huge expansion—was triggered largely by a botched attempt by authorities to exert greater control over the business.

Pachinko provides emotional release for "salarymen," or workers at corporate offices, but it also increasingly draws young couples.

In their bid to draw more women, many parlors put in love seats for couples and marked nonsmoking areas, a rarity in public buildings in Japan.

About 70 percent of parlors are owned by ethnic Koreans, including many who were born in Japan but retain South Korean or North Korean citizenship.

Because Koreans in Japan have long faced discrimination in getting mainstream jobs, many entered businesses such as pachinko that were frowned on by society. Some send money to relatives in North Korea.

Estimates of annual remittances vary widely—from about \$100 million to several billions of dollars.

Many observers suspect that some of these funds flowed into North Korea's nuclear weapons effort until that program was put on hold by a 1994 Washington-Pyongyang agreement.

Police launched their attempted crackdown a few years ago by offering parlor owners an implicit trade: permission to install higher-stakes machines in return for accepting the stricter financial controls of a system in which customers buy magnetic cards from an automatic dispenser, then insert them into machines to play.

These cards have proved a fiasco because of rampant forgery. But the money to be won or lost in a few hours has jumped dramatically.

Some machines using prepaid cards are set so that after a key win, the potential payoff is temporarily increased by 10 times, opening the possibility of winning more than \$1,000 from a single jackpot—when the initial stake can be as low as \$3.65.

The industry and authorities, however, still halfheartedly pretend that pachinko is not true gambling. Betting on horse, bicycle and motorboat races is legal, but gambling casinos are banned. To admit that pachinko is gambling would make the parlors illegal.

Almost no one wants that to happen: not the 30 million fans; not big-name companies such as Mitsubishi Corp. and Sumitomo Corp. that are trying to get a piece of the action.

Thus the 18,000 parlors scattered across Japan survive as this country's closest thing to Las Vegas-style gambling.

Losers in all this are people like Katsuyuki Hatakeyama, 23, a college student who had the misfortune several years ago of winning a few hundred dollars from a \$5 stake.

"When I won money, I acquired a taste for it," he explained. "I got hooked on it because of that. ... When you're playing the slot machine (one of the high-risk, high-payoff varieties), the sense of tension is a great feeling."

Though he now limits himself to playing once a week, Hatakeyama said he loses an average of \$300 to \$500 a month, or up to one-quarter of his living expenses. He gets about \$1,000 monthly in support from his parents and earns an equal amount working part time as a waiter, he said.

The dramatic growth has taken the murky industry to unlikely heights.

"Now is a turning point," said Han Chang Woo, 65, president of Maruhan Corp., which runs the fancy multistory Maruhan Tower that Takano and her boyfriend favor. "Pachinko parlors always had the image of gloomy places on back alleys that evaded taxes and had ties to gangsters. When I opened our pachinko tower in Shibuya last year ... I pulled pachinko out from the back alleys and onto Main Street."

Ever-divided Israel marks Rabin assassination

By Marjorie Miller
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

JERUSALEM—A year after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, an ever-divided Israel flocked to his graveside, the site of his murder and school auditoriums.

Thursday, trying to resume a truncated soul-searching over the meaning of the peace-maker's violent death.

The memorials to Rabin—on the anniversary of his death according to the Jewish calendar—were said, if somewhat ritualized in a country that has lived from crisis to tragedy for almost half a century.

Students donned the white shirts they wear on Israel's Holocaust memorial day and radio stations played a Hebrew translation of Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" written after the assassination of President Lincoln.

Parliament held a special session in memory of the Nobel laureate prime minister gunned down 4 November by a Jewish law student opposed to his policy of trading land for peace with Israel's Arab neighbors. Throughout the country, hundreds of thousands of candles were lit for the slain Rabin.

Yet, the mourning showed once again that the national unity that Israelis had hoped would emerge from their shared trauma is as illusive as ever. The only point of agreement between left-wing and right-wing, religious and secular seemed to be that the divisions among Israelis are at least as deep as they were before the assassination.

"Each side feels he knows the truth," Rabbi David Hartman of the Shalom Hartman Institute said in an interview. "The rhetoric is uncompromising. That hasn't changed. But then nothing changes after (huge) events. God gave us the Ten Commandments and people turned around to worship the Golden Cal." During the state memorial at Mount Herzl cemetery, Leah Rabin stared coldly ahead as right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu laid a wreath on her husband's grave. She is unforgiving, believing that Netanyahu's harsh speech contributed to a climate of violence that led to her husband's slaying.

Netanyahu's government, in turn, refused a family and Labor Party request to make the anniversary an official day of mourning. Two leftist members of parliament walked out on the prime minister's speech appealing for national unity.

"The murder of Yitzhak Rabin must remind us of a basic truth: peace begins at

home," Netanyahu said. "The choice before us today is to seal the rift and unite or widen the division and disintegrate."

But Israelis do not even agree on the definition of "unity." When left-leaning and secular Israelis speak of it, they mean pulling together the Jewish people and safeguarding

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leader Shimon Peres succeeded him, and, hoping to harness an outpouring of shock and initial support, called early elections. But Islamic extremists, opposed to the peace process for conceding too much to the Jews, launched suicide bombings that left more than 60 dead in three weeks last February and March.

Afraid they were giving up land without getting peace, Israelis turned to Likud's Netanyahu, who promised them peace with security and won a narrow victory in May.

Since then, the peace process for which Rabin was killed has appeared to unravel in clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian police, threats of war with Syria and tensions with Israel's Arab allies, Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Most of the country expressed outrage at Yigal Amir, Rabin's killer who was tried and jailed for life. Many called for a national commitment to nonviolence. There were efforts to bridge the chasms between religious and secular, left and right.

But the lesson seems not to have been absorbed by all.

On Tuesday, a religious Jew in a skullcap threw hot tea in the face of Yael Dayan, a left-wing member of parliament, during her working visit to Hebron. According to Nomi Hazan, another member of parliament with her, the attacker called the women "traitors" and "murderers," as Rabin's opponents had before he was killed.

Last month, an unidentified assailant threw a Molotov cocktail at the home of Yigal Amir's parents in Ramat Gan. No one was hurt, but the house was damaged.

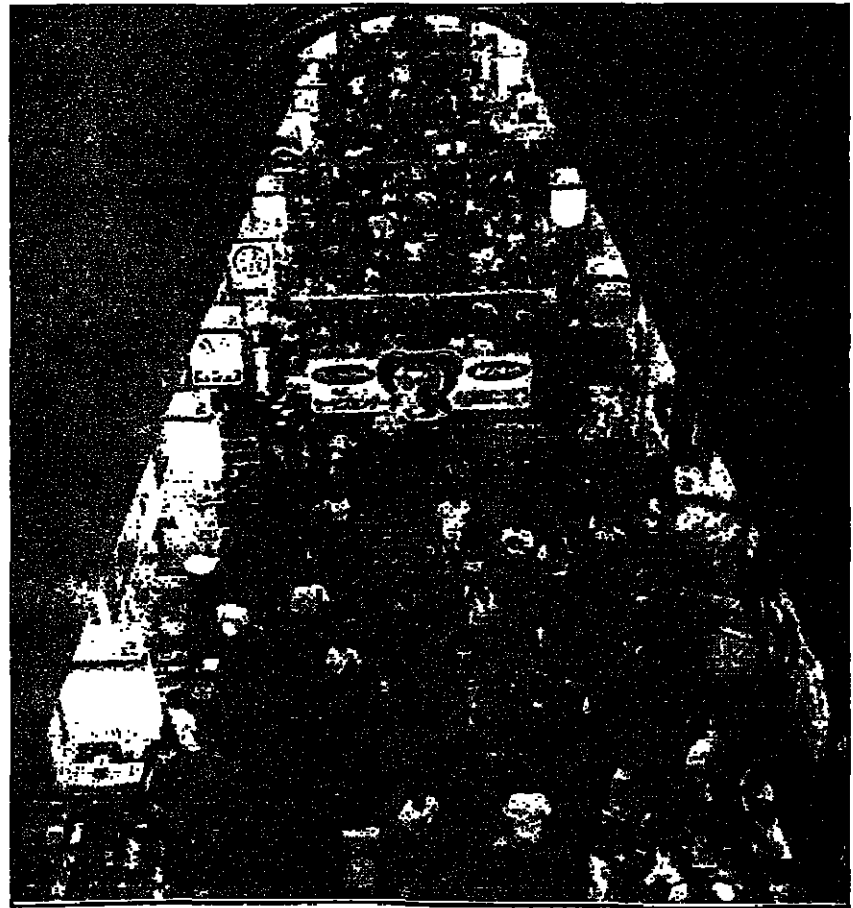
While some girls in Kiryat Gat formed a Yigal Amir fan club, Supreme Court president Aharon Barak was assigned security guards after he came under attack in the ultra-Orthodox press for his rulings.

Security forces meanwhile reportedly have received a growing number of threats against political leaders from Dayan to Netanyahu, who is planning to redeploy Israeli troops from Hebron under Rabin's accord.

Most students who spent Thursday in assemblies discussing the value of human life, tolerance in public debate and preservation of democracy, felt there had been little improvement in these areas in the last year.

Liat Galinsky, 16, of Denmark High School, observed: "Nothing has changed, really. The public is still divided. There are even those who think the murder was good. The other half of the public thinks this was the most terrible thing that happened to us. This comes up in classes all the time."

The students echoed Yonatan Ben Artzi, Rabin's grandson, who said at the graveside ceremony: "I want to ask your forgiveness, grandfather. A year has passed and nothing has changed. It appears nothing has changed."



The pachinko machine is driving more and more people to the pinball machine for tension relief

Imported Russian dancers take over in Cairo

By Sahar El Bahr

WHEN the going gets tough at home, the brave go in search of new pastures. This is at least how Russian belly dancers, a recent Egyptian import, explain their presence on a turf which has traditionally belonged to Egyptians.

But are foreign dancers such a new phenomenon? "No," says a famous entertainer Samir Sabri, responsible for launching the Russians in our night spots. "In the '40s and '50s there were many foreign troupes which stayed in Egypt for several seasons performing in night clubs. Russian ballet troupes were among the favourites in those days."

Sabri explains the advantages of choosing Russian over Egyptian

performers. "Russia," he says, "is famous for its ballet dancers, who now, due to the difficult economic conditions at home, prefer to work in other countries. I hire them because they are first and foremost professionals who started ballet at an early age. They, therefore, learn new routines in a matter of hours and do not mind training long hours, something they are used to doing. Unlike Egyptian belly dancers, they do not specialize in one type of dance. They usually offer a wide range of dances in the same programme."

There seems to be an endless supply of candidates willing and able to fill the hotel night clubs and tourist spots in and around Cairo. With a merciless business disposition, Sabri takes full advantage of the situation, changing his sets of dancers

every six months because, "the easy work conditions in Egypt make them lazy after a while." Furthermore, he explains, one of the most endearing traits of these foreigners is their readiness to work for a pittance especially when they are newcomers, accepting LE30 a show on average.

According to Maj. Gen. Mohsen Hefzi, director of the Tourist Investigation Police, "most hotels and nightclub owners prefer to hire Russian belly dancers because their wages are low, some of them accepting to work for their accommodation and meals only, others charging \$10 per show."

Girls such as these are quite likely to have been originally brought to Egypt by Sabri. Once their six-month contract is over, they are forced to seek work in almost any night spot that will accept them in order to stay a while longer in Egypt.

How did Sabri hit on the idea of importing belly dancers? "In 1990," he says, "I hired my first dancers through the Egyptian Embassy in Moscow. Later I made direct contacts with ballet troupes in Russia and sent them my specifications. I hire dancers between the ages of 18 and 24 with good professional backgrounds on the basis of a single six-month contract. At present my troupe includes six dancers, all with professional licences."

Sabri also hires professional Russian trainers and takes pride in being the first to have thought of reaching the girls belly dancing. His troupe represents Egypt in international folk festivals, performs at venues organized by the Ministry of Tourism in Egypt and takes part in Egyptian Tourism Week.

The success of imported dancers is so great that agencies doing a brisk business in providing hotels and night clubs with foreign performers have sprouted in Egypt. The agencies are also taking over the market for providing dancers at weddings and private parties.

After the establishment of the Reda Folklore Troupe in the sixties, there was a revival of interest in Egyptian folkloric dances in general and belly dancing in particular. It became fashionable to have a famous belly dancer performing at upper class weddings. The art moved from local night spots to five-star hotels, thanks in

particular to tourist interest, and finally found its way to dance studios, where housewives practise the steps, wearing elegant training suits, and afterwards display their progress to female friends. Meanwhile famous dancers were starring in films and the fees they charged increased proportionally to their popularity. Some bumped their fees up so high that they priced themselves out of the market.

Moving out of its natural boundaries, belly dancing found enthusiasts in Europe and the United States, where it was taught seriously in dance studios and learned without any cultural connotations.

In Egypt, lower and middle class families will often discourage their daughters from taking up dancing, considering it socially unacceptable as a career. Foreigners have been only too happy to step in and fill the void. Twenty-year-old Elena, for example, is a university graduate in meteorology who dances by night to pay for the English lessons she attends during the day. Elena wants to learn English to help her earn a good salary in Russia where foreign languages have become a marked advantage among those applying for jobs in many professions. Although there are many English-language institutes in Russia, Elena feels she has more opportunities to practise her speaking skills here. She found it quite easy to learn to belly dance, she says, and now practises for three to four hours a day.

Elena's friend Nadia, who just came for a visit "to see some of my colleagues who have married Egyptian men," enjoys performing at night. For her, belly dancing presents little problem as she mastered modern ballet in Russia. But Nadia does not intend to stay long. She complains that the mentality of Egyptians differs from hers in too many ways. But as many avenues have opened up for her in modelling, ads and video clips, she shows no signs of going yet. In these fields also she charges less than her Egyptian counterparts do.

It is often claimed that the success of the foreigners is due to their physical appearance, which is so different from that of traditional Egyptian belly dancers. But Walid Awani, head of the Modern Dance Theatre Troupe disagrees; the Russians, he says, are popular not because of the colour



of their eyes, hair or complexion, but because they are better qualified and more skilful than Egyptians, due to their high physical fitness and suppleness. "The outcome is that the Egyptian dancer rarely improves, feels frustrated and then gives up," says Awani. But, Awani complains, "I am very upset when ever I see the Russian representing Egypt at international festivals inside and outside Egypt. They may be qualified, but their bodies, features, and spirit are alien to what is typically Egyptian."

Awani attributes the present problems basically to a lack of funds. Egyptian dancers are not trained properly from an early age. He suggests that instead of spending money on foreign dancers we should use the funds to train our own dancers better.

The dancers themselves, however, do not seem to feel that they are in competition with each other. While the Russians voice

the belief that in a competitive market the job is given to the best, Egyptian belly dancer Amany claims that only three two-star hotels are employing Russian dancers. So what is the fuss all about? Famous Egyptian dancers will always have an edge in five-star hotels, she says. Besides, there are many Egyptian dancers performing abroad.

Egyptian authorities are, nevertheless, starting to worry. Faced with such an influx, some ground rules had to be laid down. According to Maj. Gen. Osama Fikri, former head of the Tourist and Antiquities Police, a committee including officials from the General Conscription of Works of Art and the Ministry of Interior recently came up with recommendations aimed at organizing and restricting the work of foreign dancers in such a way that they do not deprive Egyptians of employment. ■

Al-Ahram Weekly

History of female dancers in Egypt

Trade Like Any Other, Female Singers and dancers in Egypt, By Karin Van Nieuwkerk, American University in Cairo Press.

IN EGYPT, singing and dancing are considered essential on happy occasions. Professional entertainers often perform at weddings and other celebrations, and host families' prestige rises with the number, expense, and fame of the entertainers they hire. Paradoxically, however, the entertainers themselves are often viewed as disreputable people and are accorded little prestige in Egyptian society.

This paradox is the starting point of Nieuwkerk's look at the Egyptian entertainment trade. She explores the lives of female performers and the reasons why work they regard as "a trade like any other" is considered disreputable in Egyptian society. In particular, she demonstrates that while male entertainers are often viewed as simply "making a living," female performers are almost

always considered bad, seductive women engaged in dishonourable conduct. She traces this perception to the social definition of the female body as always a sexual and an enticing perception that stigmatizes women entertainers even as it simultaneously offers them a means of livelihood, drawn from extensive fieldwork and enriched with the life stories of entertainers and nightclub performers. This is the first ethnography of female singers and dancers in present-day Egypt. It will be of interest to a wide audience in anthropology, women studies, and Middle East culture, as well as anyone who enjoys belly dancing. Nieuwkerk is a lecturer in social anthropology at the university of Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

A Trade Like Any Other is an American University in Cairo Press publication, available at AUC Bookstores: 113 Kasr El Aini Street and 16 Ibn Thakheh, Zamalek and all major bookstores in Egypt. Price, LE 60. ■

Sweden struggles with modern economic, social realities

By Mary Williams Walsh
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

AKALLA. Sweden—Each afternoon, they gather at the Sibelius bar, on a well-trod pedestrian lane in this suburb of Stockholm: the flotsam of a system that wasn't supposed to let anyone down.

There is Steiner Holth, once a highly paid pressman who, at 47, was forced out of his job just in time to sample the cutbacks in Sweden's unemployment-compensation program.

There is Karin Skogstad, who broke her wrist and discovered how much the national sick-pay rate had been rolled back.

There is Ingmar Gesmo, a 50-year-old bus driver whose employer was privatized and who was given a choice: longer hours and a pay cut, or a layoff, in an economy where unemployment is close to 14 percent.

And the bike paths, parks, libraries and day-care centers of this simply provisioned little corner of the Swedish welfare state, these unfortunate and their unemployed friends while away the afternoons in a beer joint, passing around dog-eared copies of the Stockholm tabloids and venting steam over the oustings reported inside.

For not only has Sweden—burdened by a yawning budget deficit and little possibility of increasing tax revenues—been struggling to slim down its famous welfare state these past few years. It turns out that some of the very people once trusted to administer the system—members of the political elite—now tell Holth and Skogstad and the rest to pull up their socks, that a little sacrifice would be just the thing for Swedish society—are playing the system in ways people here expect to see in a Third World backward but not in their own corner Nordic state.

"If you ask me, they should all be in jail," says Sibelius regular Britmarie Heydorn, a 53-year-old former government researcher who, since she was laid off, has been making a living nursing the elderly.

Recent months have seen scandal follow scandal within Sweden's Social Democratic Party, which has ruled this country for all but 10 of the last 64 years, and which put in place the womb-to-tomb welfare state after World War II.

Most of the wrongdoing involves municipal politicians and such small-time incidents as taxpayer-subsidized trips to restaurants and strip clubs. But what makes the scandals matter here is, well, this is Sweden—a proud society, with four Prot-

estant understandings about hard work, honesty and civic responsibility. Egalitarianism is the bedrock concept of the culture here, the way individual liberty is in America.

Wrongdoing in public office "clashes with the idea of most

gambling debts.

■ In Motala, a city about 150 miles southwest of Stockholm, politicians are revealed to have treated themselves and their wives to taxpayer-funded meals, clothing and pleasure trips to Berlin and the French Riviera.

Officeholder misbehavior compounds the struggle Swedes already are engaged in trying to come to terms with a string of ugly, and most un-Swedish, incidents dating to the murder of Palme on a Stockholm sidewalk in 1986.

Recent months have seen scandal follow scandal within Sweden's Social Democratic Party, which has ruled this country for all but 10 of the last 64 years, and which put in place the womb-to-tomb welfare state after World War II

people in this country," says Jan Guillot, a popular Swedish novelist. "We're not used to this."

Sweden's new season of political unease began in 1995, when the front-running contender for prime minister, Mona Sahlin, was reported by the tabloid Expressen to have used her state-provided credit card to pay for such personal items as snacks and auto rentals.

Sahlin, who was then deputy prime minister and equality minister in the Social Democratic government, had paid the amounts back but it sometimes took her a month or more to do so.

To jaded Americans, capable of digesting and forgetting accounts of presidential telephone conversations overheard by call girls, this may sound like tame stuff. Sahlin's "crime" amounts, in essence, to a series of unauthorized, interest-free loans, usually in the low three figures.

But given Sweden's sturdy traditions of probity and fairness, Sahlin felt obliged to step down after the revelations hit print. Former finance minister Goran Persson became prime minister.

The Sahlin episode inspired regional newspapers in Sweden to have a look at who else might be breaking the rules. What they turned up has outraged hard-pressed ordinary citizens:

■ In Gavle, north of Stockholm, records suggest that city and county politicians charged visits to a Brussels, Belgium, porno club to their government credit cards while supposedly attending a European symposium on traffic problems.

■ Gavle's chapter president of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities is reported to have used his expense account to cover more than \$100,000 in

Much different in nature—but still deeply unsettling here—was the sinking in September 1994 of the Baltic ferry "Estonia," with the loss of nearly 1,000 lives, most of them Swedes.

The loss of the "Estonia" was also framed by two gun massacres—the sort northern Europeans associate with America's mean streets but not with their own cobblestoned lanes and tree-bordered squares. In the summer of 1994, a Swedish army lieutenant stationed in the city of Falun went on a rampage and shot seven bystanders to death. And in January 1995 a young man denied entry to a popular Stockholm discotheque came back and opened fire with an assault rifle, killing four patrons and wounding about 20.

All this came on top of the pain of 1993, when the "Swed-

ish Model" economy hit a stone wall. Growth, which had been faltering ever since the oil shocks of the early 1970s, petered out completely; Social Democratic attempts to spend their way back to growth and full employment led to a huge budget deficit. Suddenly, the country that had never known unemployment had a rate as high as 14 percent, depending on the measurement technique, and government spending had reached 73 percent of economic output.

Today, many economists applaud Sweden's ongoing efforts to restore economic order, bringing inflation well under control and reducing certain public benefits that were well above the European average. Budget reductions are said to be on track, and the public debt is expected to stabilize by 1998.

But the unemployment rate is stuck at calamity levels. And something fundamental has changed deeply in public attitudes. A society once admired for its trust, generosity and high moral standards has become harder, less self-confident, more suspicious.

Such a mood leaves government policy-makers with little maneuvering room when it comes to further economic reforms. Yet many economists say that if unemployment is to be reduced, Sweden needs more incentives to encourage entrepreneurship—including tax cuts for high earners, deregulation and softened labor laws. ■

MasterCard withdraws TV commercial that mocked Islamic prayer

MASTERCARD International has agreed to withdraw a Canadian television commercial that Muslims said mocked Islamic prayers. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) asked for the French-language commercial's withdrawal after receiving complaints from Canadian Muslims. CAIR's request was backed up by calls, faxes and email messages from Muslims across North America.

In a statement faxed to CAIR, MasterCard said in part: "As a result of input (from) concerned members of the Canadian and US Islamic community, MasterCard will immediately discontinue use of a Canadian French-language television spot that was aired in the province of Quebec. In developing this advertisement MasterCard took steps to ensure cultural sensitivity and in no way did the association intend to treat any ethnic or religious group in a disparaging manner."

"MasterCard would like to apologize to those consumers that were offended by the depiction in the ad."

The "comical" minute-long commercial was set in Morocco and featured a well-known French-Canadian actress searching for her lost MasterCard. The most offensive part of the commercial came at the end when the minaret of a mosque was shown and part of the ad-hoc, fading into "Allah, Allah" was heard. The actress made a play on words referring to "Allah" while a group of "Muslims" was shown kneeling and bowing in the dirt street behind her.

"May Allah reward all those who called, faxed and emailed MasterCard. Perhaps this unfortunate incident will help sensitize other companies to Muslim concerns and may even prevent a similar occurrence in the future," said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad. ■

A view from America 'Please close the scandal'

By Carrie Nelle Moya
Star US correspondent

"PLEASE CLOSE the scandal." Words are interesting. It is especially intriguing to know the derivation of various nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and so on. One who has studied Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, or German can recognize many "cousins" in English.

Indeed, if one encounters a new word, even a slight knowledge of one or more of the above languages might well give one the clue as to the meaning.

Then there are those with fun backgrounds. "Apron," for example, once was "napron." When one wanted "a napron," and made reference to this with repeated usage it evolved into "an apron." Not particularly important, just interesting.

The story of a common closing used in correspondence is far more fascinating. At the height of the glories of the Greco-Roman civilization, affluent citizens felt it necessary to have marble statuary in their gardens. As the demand increased, so did the number of artisans to provide the supply. And of course many sculptors who were not as gifted as their counterparts enjoyed a thriving business. But there was a big catch. The less talented, unscrupulous ones would fill in their imperfections (cracks, nicks) with wax. Thus an imperfect statue remaining in

a garden for a few days soon would be exposed as the sun melted the wax. Thus the sculptor who was legitimate began to sign the bottoms of statuary, in the native Latin, sine (without) cerius (wax). The purity of sine cerius evolved into our familiar letter closing, "Sincerely." Recently someone e-mailed me information on a specific subject. In the context of the data, he had used the word "assassin." As an aside he noted, "Incidentally, the word assassin is one of the few Arabic words that has made its way into the English language." Wrong.

There are many that have come to us by one route or another.

Just a few: "cotton" is from *qun*; "muslin" is from *musul*; a city in Iraq, and "damask" obviously is from Damascus.

The "tabby" cat comes to us from a striped cloth woven in a section of Baghdad known as *Attabi*. "Algebra" comes from *Al-Jabr*. "Guitar" is the Arabic *qitar* "alcove" comes from *Al-qubba*, "tariff" is from *Al-tarif*, and "almanac" is first cousin to *Al-Manakh* (weather). *Shish kebabs*, "yogurt" and *hashish* all are Arabic (with the last word also meaning "weeds" and "grass," depending on context).

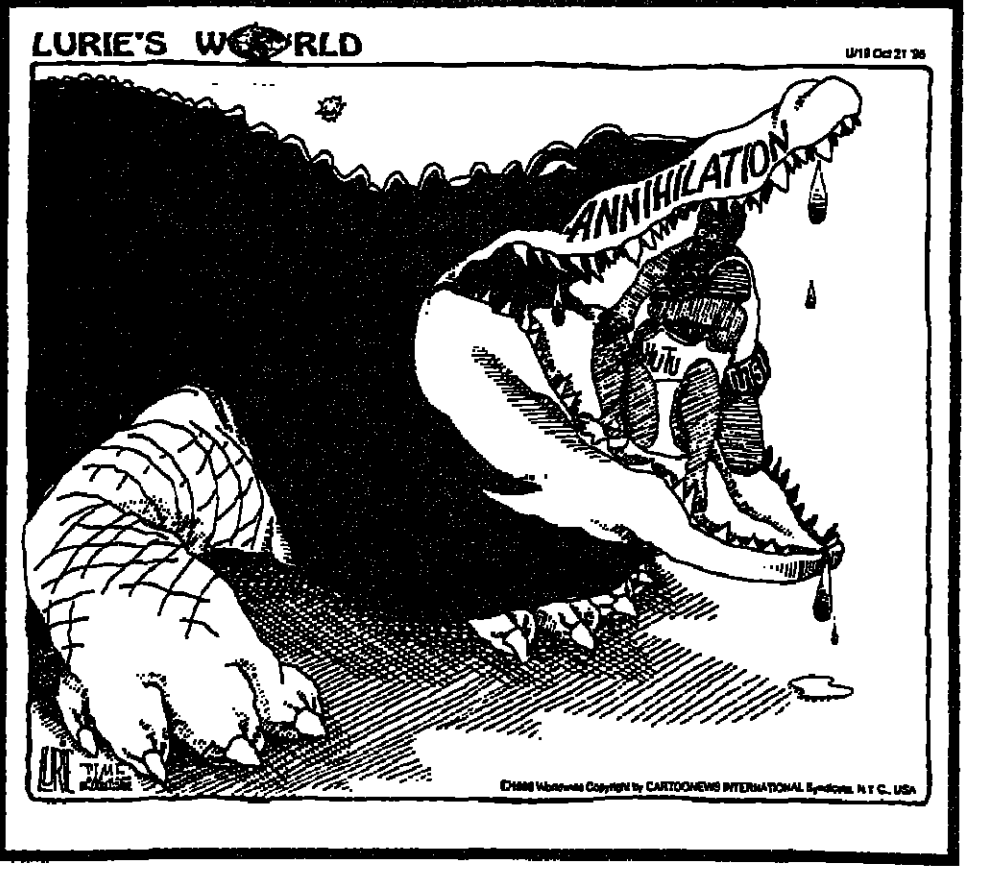
From Persia (now Iran, not Arabic but most definitely Middle Eastern) we find such as "rook" (from *rukh* (castle), "checkmate" from *shahmat* (the king is dead) and "julep"

(rosewater). Naturally these lists could continue almost *ad infinitum*, but the point is made. Which brings us to the immediate past, present and not-too-distant future and far-distant future. Some words catch on with the public and stick.

"Watergate" occurred in the early 1970s. Now pundits to poems (Spanish) like to attach "gate" to all manner of scandals. Since 1992 we have been bombarded with "travelgate" and "filegate." To my knowledge no one has used the terms

"Indonesiagate" or "Paulagate" but do not be surprised when they appear. We find Dole in the middle of "campaign mudgate" following what some saw as his lackadaisical "debategate." (And if the Yankees win the world series, no doubt we shall experience "Bravegate.") Poor, poor little unassuming "gate." It has come to mean something illegal, slimy, offensive. Proven or disproved, the affixation of "gate" to a word or syllable most certainly connotes scandal.

If, in the natural course of evolution, "gate" undergoes a transformation, our great, great, great grandchildren might well be heard to say, "When you pass out of the courtyard, please close the scandal." And someone will wonder just how that came to be. ■





Amman celebrates Halloween

● IF YOU happened to have run across a vampire crossing the street Thursday night, do not brush it off as a mere trick of the eye. Today 31 October, youth and adults alike celebrate Halloween. From horror films to costume parties, the key to fun on Halloween night is plenty of candy. Champions in the Marriott Hotel are one of the many restaurants that are hosting a Halloween party. The couple with the best costume will be awarded a prize.



Scrapbook

By Osama El-Sherif

Short-sighted planning

ON THE highway to Zerqa, just before you get to the Ein Ghazal Intersection, and right on the main road there is a small Roman mausoleum called Al Nuwegees. A beautiful domed structure that is still intact, it is a reminder of Amman's ancient and diverse history. I admit that I never had the chance to visit the building, and I doubt that it is open to the public, but whenever I pass by it I am saddened by the fact that this unique piece of antiquity is neglected the way it is.

But recently and as if to add to the mausoleum's neglect, the Department of Antiquities decided to erect a huge metal warehouse right next to it. Al Nuwegees now sits on a busy intersection, frequented by buses and lorries, surrounded by barbed wire and a huge ugly warehouse now looms over it. I don't know how important the building is to historians and archaeologists. It might not be. But it remains a beautiful site that is part of Amman's history and heritage. The irony is that the Department of Antiquities, which is supposed to protect such monuments is the one that has built the ugly warehouse right next to it. I don't see their point. There must be hundreds if not thousands of empty government owned plots where the department could have built its warehouse. But it chose this particular spot right next to a historical site which otherwise could have been used as one additional point of attraction for tourists. What the department successfully did was to erect an eyesore for all to see.

This is not the first time that the issue of protecting antiquities from engulfing urbanization is raised. Petra lovers warned about the threat of building new hotels close to the Nabatean city. Jerash is now surrounded by make shift buildings.

I am amazed at planners who designed the Sahab-Azraq highway which almost runs through two of the most beautiful desert castles in the eastern desert, Qusayr Amra and Qasr Al Haranah. Of all the immense desert around, the road passes only few meters away from these magnificent Arabian hunting lodges, disturbing the sublime tranquillity which these buildings enjoyed for centuries. In fact the planners were so pleased with themselves that they planted the main transmitters of Radio Jordan on the other side of the highway facing Qasr Al Haranah.

Imagine how would a first-time visitor to either of these lodges would feel if these lodges were left standing in isolation about seven or ten kilometers from the main highway, away from passing fuel tankers and speeding cars.

I wonder where the Department of Antiquities was when the road plans were first approved. I am sure that vibrations and pollution from passing traffic will add its toll on these fragile structures.

The Department of Antiquities must become actively involved in protecting these and other historical sites from short-sighted planning. But with the department being solely responsible for what has taken place at Al Nuwegees, one wonders if our archaeological sites are in safe hands after all. ■

Bani Hamida sets a trend in weaving

By Star Staff Writer

Nature gave bedouins its threads and trained them how to weave life. They proved to be good learners and soon turned out to be creative craftsmen.

Living in 14 villages in the south of Madaba and Mountain Nebo, the Bani Hamida tribe is setting an example.

Starting in 1985, the Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project has been seeking to display and promote the latest weaving and handicraft designs carried out by bedouins. The project, which turned later into the Jordan Society for Development (JSD), not only shows the modern weaving trends but it also helps bedouin women create self-sustaining projects providing them with new source of income.

The society holds its fall and spring exhibitions each year. The fall exhibition is currently displayed at the Dirani Car showroom in Shmeisani and contains a variety of rugs, carpets and wallhangings. The exhibits are real pieces of art displaying bedouin creativity and dexterity.

"We follow up the latest designs and styles of weaving in international magazines to keep up with the latest trends," Natasha Shawareb, project manager, told *The Star*.

The Bani Hamida office in Amman is respon-

sible for training bedouins and marketing their products. Shawareb said that the society helped set up four centers in rural areas where bedouin women are taught the different styles of weaving, dyeing and management. In addition to the modern styles of weaving, there are the traditional ones "which are preferred by customers," Shawareb maintained. Yet, the variety of handicrafts displayed give customers the opportunity to have different choices.

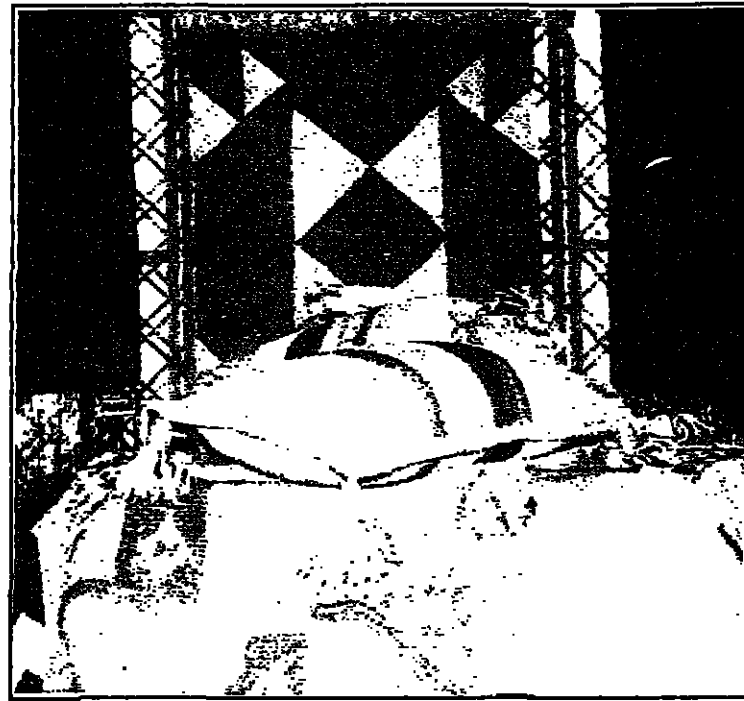
In the past, bedouins made carpets and rugs as parts of their home furniture and now they are using them as viable sources of income. Catering to the needs of the local and international markets, Bani Hamida weavings and designs are internationally famous.

Shawareb said that keeping up with the world designs and providing a variety of handicrafts comes within the philosophy of the society to satisfy the needs of its customers. Several showrooms were set up for marketing purposes. There is the Bani Hamida House in Amman which was opened in 1989. Located in Jabal Amman, the 70 year-old house was renovated for that purpose. Also there is the Bani Hamida house in Mukawir. Opened last April, it caters to the needs of tourists visiting the historical site of Bani Hamida Mountain.

The project is spreading its weaving trends

globally. It participates in international trade fairs in the Arab world, Europe and the US. The society sells rugs before they reach the loom to avoid the stockpiling of unsold goods.

While the making of the rugs and carpets was restricted in the past to the home needs, it is now helping women be active members in the family. They are able now to assist their brothers and daughters to complete their education. Since 1985, about 1514 women participated in the project. Up till September 1996, the society paid the women weavers a total of JD 908,302.302 in wages. ■



Baladna Art Gallery, first Arabic exhibition online

AMMAN (Star)—Arabia.On.Line, the leading network in the Arab world, launched the first online Arab art network. Serving as a vehicle for comprehensive coverage of current trends in Arab art, the network embraced the Baladna Art Gallery in Amman as its first Arabic exhibition available on the Internet. Users can access the site at <http://arabia.com/Baladna>. In a month's time, the gallery will gain its own independent address on the internet.

Arabia.On.Line decided to launch the art network keeping in mind that Arab art venues and artists have received little attention on a world-wide scale. This is perhaps due to the fact that it is unfeasible for most artists to hold an exhibition in Europe or

the USA. The expenses of such an enterprise can run high. To give Arab artists the chance they deserve, Arabia.On.Line sought to exploit the technological advantages provided by the Internet.

Take Baladna as an example. Millions of users from all over the world can now enter the gallery, view current art exhibitions, send back comments and even buy works of art. This will open a non-stop dialogue between Arab artists and the world which will have considerable benefits to Arab art and enhance its stature.

The virtual exhibition will become a model for all Arab galleries aspiring on the Internet. Arabia.On.Line will advertise for the gallery on its opening screen which currently attracts more than 140,000 daily visitors.

Since its inception, the Baladna Art Gallery has served as a venue for highlighting pioneering plastic art experiments in Jordan and the Arab world. The gallery is a haven for Arab artists seeking the opportunity to display new experiments in plastic arts.

During its five-year history, Baladna organized exhibitions for artists from Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia,

Kuwait, Oman and Yemen.

When the site is accessed, a beautifully designed intro screen greets your eyes. Clickable buttons lead to different sections which include an introduction about Baladna, reviews of the gallery, current and upcoming exhibitions, and order and feedback forms.

To view current and upcoming events, the user clicks the Art Exhibitions button. The screen opens to a page containing three clickable buttons leading to information about recent and current exhibitions. A third button takes the user to the Arab Women Artists page which contains samples of their work.

The most promising aspect for the gallery is the order form. Due to the diffusion of the Internet throughout the world, Jordanian and Arab artists can now assume an effective role in the international arena. The days when artists could exhibit for only a few hundred people are gone.

"Thanks to Baladna's virtual exhibition, our artists can now achieve international exposure," said Baladna owner and director Mrs Suad Isawi-Hourani. "Moreover, artists can now sell their work online to a world audience, something which was not possible prior to the Internet," she added.

Mr Khalid Tabaza, Arabia online's publisher, maintained: "We are proud to be the designers of the first Arabic gallery. Our commitment to quality will make the gallery a role model for similar projects in the future." ■



British Airways awards top travel agents



BRITISH AIRWAYS held a cocktail reception followed by a gala dinner for Jordanian travel agents at the Forte Grand Hotel in Amman on 22 October, 1996. The airline awarded the 15 travel agents who made the largest number of sales for the 1995/1996.

Mrs Fiona Hamilton, BA Manager in Jordan, thanked all the travel agents for their support and promised that British Airways will continue serving the Jordanian market, thus enhancing the quality of business and leisure travel between Jordan and the United Kingdom.

Amongst the awarded winners were Trust Tours, Pan Pacific and Al Waha Travel. ■

An evening with Chopin

ON THE occasion of the National Day of Poland, the Polish Embassy in Amman in cooperation with Freddy for Music, is presenting an evening of classical music at the Royal Cultural Center on 7 November, 1996.

Pianist, Oxana Musleh, who is a well-known music teacher at the Freddy for Music center, will play the very best in Polish classical music with such favorites as Chopin. Ms Musleh holds a Master's Degree in music and is famous for opera arias.

She will be accompanied on stage by Mrs Cappavina. Both artists held many concerts in Jordan and overseas. The concert starts at 8 pm, and ticket price is JD 7. ■

UNDP earmarks \$203,000 for Queen Alia Fund, Poverty-Oriented NGO

UNDP — As part of its overriding goal to eradicate poverty worldwide, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has made available grants totalling \$203,000 for income-generating and capacity-building projects targeting pockets of poverty in Jordan.

The Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, which is chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, was awarded \$103,000 for its project on poverty alleviation and grassroots participation, calling upon greater community involvement in the development process. The Fund designed pilot schemes in basic business skills training and extending credit to rural women.

Another \$100,000 has been allocated to poverty-related projects in Jordan from UNDP's Partners in Development Programme (PDP) which has been providing small grants to community-based self-help initiatives around the world since 1988. In the past, the PDP has awarded grants totalling \$75,000 to a tapestry and rug making project in Karak, a development project benefiting low-income families in the Zerqa area and for academic training and purchase of equipment for the College of Occupational Therapy at the King Hussein Medical Center. ■

Italian Film Week concludes at Royal Cultural Center

AMMAN (Star)—The Embassy of Italy in Amman and the Ministry of Culture organized the 11th Italian Film Week between 22-29 October. Held at the Royal Cultural Center under the patronage of HRH Princess Sarvath Hassan, six films about different cultural settings were shown.

The film week began with *Sostiene Pereira* (Pereira Holds). It is about a journalist who lived during the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal. Pereira, who worked for a pro-government newspaper, used to censor every thought except those which appeal to him. It was not until he experienced violence and killing that he started to change his ideas.

Regalo Di Natale or (Christmas Present) was the second film on the schedule. The story is about five friends who are looking forward to winning a poker game that would change their lives. The film tells the story of each one of them, their problems, hopes and social status.

Coming third was the *Romanzo Di Un Giovane Povero* (The Story of a Poor Young Man). Two neighbors, young Mr Vincenzo and old Mr Bartoloni, lead a miserable life. One feels frustrated because he is unemployed and the latter because of his fat, drunkard, annoying wife. Mr Bartoloni plots with Vincenzo to kill his wife, but she dies accidentally

before they could achieve their goal. Feeling desperate, Mr Bartoloni accuses Vincenzo of murdering his wife.

The fourth film was *Una Semplice* (A Simple Story). It began with the Sicilian police investigating the mysterious death of the ex-diplomat Luca Rocella. A train station manager was found dead along with another worker. A car driver found the two and went to inform the police. The real murderers are kept unknown except for the driver who decided to keep that as a secret. Despite the title of the film, the story turns out to be a very complicated one.

The fifth film titled *Per Grazia Ricevuta* (For Favours Received). A boy who received a strict religious education identifies sex with sin. When he reached his first communion he was not courageous enough to tell the priest that he saw "a glimpse of his aunt." The boy was shocked by the fact. Then he was consecrated to Saint Eusebio and was entrusted to a monastery. Becoming a hawker in adulthood, he met during his trips a "freethinker pharmacist" who cures him of his "religious obsession."

The film week ended with *Nemici d'infanzia* (Childhood Enemies). It relates the story of a 12 year old boy, Paolo who falls in love with the daughter of a German woman and a fascist official. The boy decides to help a new lodger who comes to kill the father. He is the only witness to the murder but refuses to reveal the identity of the killer because of growing friendship.



A movie shot from *Nemici d'infanzia*

Mr Giovanni Benenati from the cultural section of the Italian Embassy said that the proceeds of the film week are going to the Young Women Muslim Association. The films, he added, were attended by Jordanians who graduated from Italian universities. Italians living in Amman and Jordanian moviegoers. "All films were subtitled into English." ■

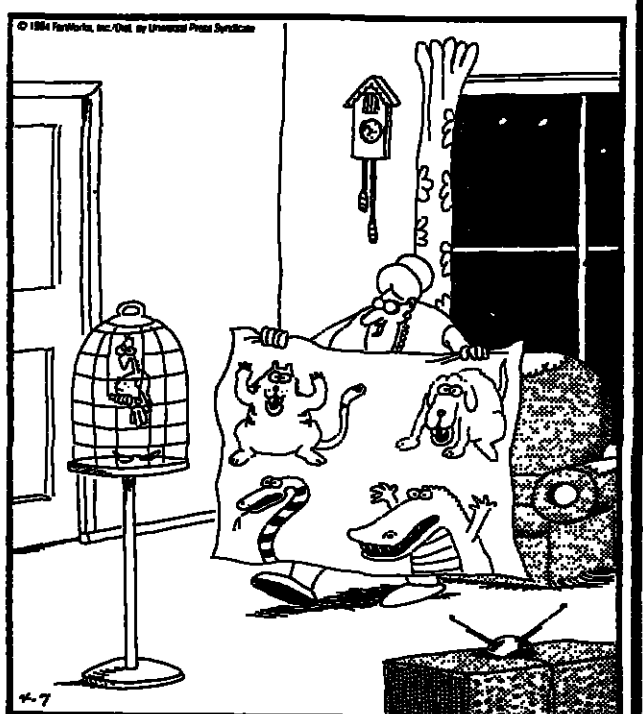
● Exhibition and Sale of lithographs, old postcards and photographs on Jerusalem, Chinese paintings, at Um El Kundum, right off the Airport highway on the way to Arabian Horse Club, first left at the top of the hill. Friday 1 November from 11 am onwards. Tel: 664805

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Uh-oh, I've got a feeling I shouldn't have been munching on these things for the last mile."



"Bedtime, Leroy. Here comes your animal blanket."

AGENDA

Exhibitions
■ Works by Nabeel Shihadeh, at Darat al Funun, continues till 13 November.
■ Another Land by Muhammad Nasrallah, at Darat al Funun, continues till 13 November.
■ Timeless Weaving and New Creations, at the Jordan Crafts Development Center (Al Aydi), ends today at 6 pm. The Center is located at Jabal Amman.

2nd Circle.

Films
■ *Garavaggio and the Baroque*, at Darat al Funun, today at 5:00 pm.
■ *Around The World in 80 Days*, at the British Council, 5 November at 5:00 pm.

Concert

■ *The Forgettables* at the USIS Auditorium, 3 November at 7:00 pm.

SLAPSTIX
In the Halls of Justice, the only justice is in the halls.

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OCTOBER 1996

A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for
The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN FIVE LANGUAGES
ON FIVE CONTINENTS

APPEARING IN: AMMAN • BANGKOK • BEIJING • BOMBAY • BOSTON • CAIRO • CARACAS • HONG KONG • JAKARTA • KARACHI • KUALA LUMPUR • LIMA • MANILA • MEXICO CITY • MOSCOW • PANAMA CITY • QUITO • SAN JOSE • TAIPEI • TOKYO



The full weight of the Soviet army could not cow Afghanistan. Police in US cities cannot quell the gangs that roam them. In a world where David is routinely armed with missiles and AK-47s, Goliath is finding that the best way to keep the peace is to negotiate. Today's relationships—international, social and personal—are increasingly being shaped by mediators and their art

Without two superpowers, force has lost much of its effectiveness

Blasting a path that only a mediator can tread

By Padraig O'Malley

AS AMERICAN CRUISE missiles streak across the night skies of Iraq, it is hard to believe that mediation is becoming the dominant form of conflict resolution. But it is, and for one very simple reason—there is no other way.

Exponential advances in military technology, the miniaturization of technology and the innumerable ways we have ingeniously devised to erase ourselves in large numbers have, in a sense, made the evolution of conflict resolution measures almost inevitable. We have bequeathed ourselves

15,000 feet.

There is a growing realization that it is not only nuclear war that leaves no winner. The sheer scale of the technological developments in the area of so-called conventional weaponry, the globalization of the armaments industry, the ease of availability and the instantaneousness of communications are slowly teaching us a new lesson for a new age: violence as a solution to conflict inevitability leads to stagnation.

Negotiations today are not an alternative, but invariably the only alternative. Increasing interdependence, the

Union, competed globally selling their respective wares: capitalism and communism. They established their respective hegemonies (market shares, so to speak), and made sure that the governments of the countries in their "spheres of influence" hewed to the appropriate politically correct line. Dispute resolution meant cutting off aid, sending in the gunboats or applying some other variation of the "big stick" approach.

The two superpowers poured money into their client—or would-be client—states to prop up faltering, often despotic regimes on both the right and the left and crush dissent. Both displayed an equal indifference to what some elements in civil society had the temerity to call human rights. The Soviet Union was especially enamored of the "iron fist"—no doubt conflict resolution techniques such as mediation transgressed some arcane principle of Marxist Leninism.

Interests, not people were what counted. This lay behind the West's long-standing tolerance of apartheid, despite the routine condemnations it felt obliged to make periodically. White South Africa was, after all, a reliable and stalwart ally against the spread of Marxism throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. We lived in a world of impending Armageddon, but we also lived in a world the complexities of that threat engendered: a world where the political virtues were few but cast in granite. In the end, it was up to the superpowers to sort things out and keep life on the planet, as we knew it, alive.

All that changed with the collapse of

communism in Eastern Europe, the literal and symbolic demolition of the Berlin Wall and upheavals in the Soviet Union leading to the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

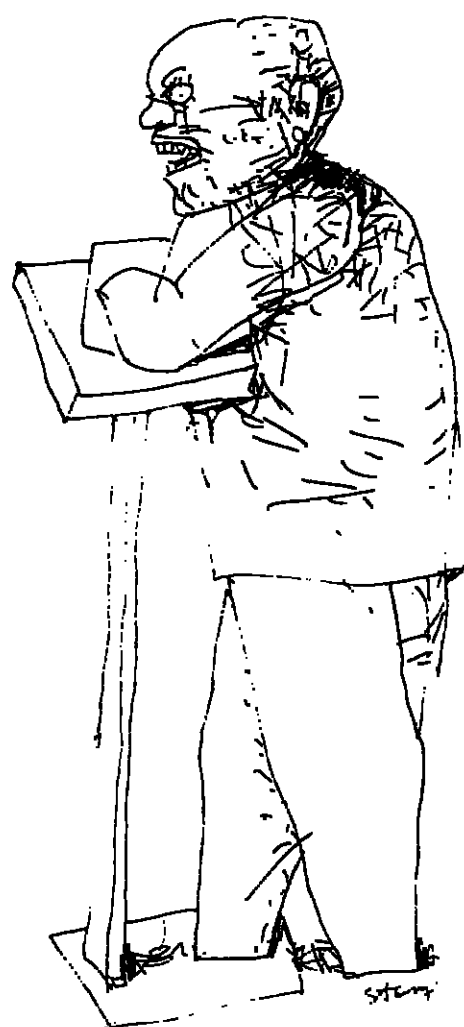
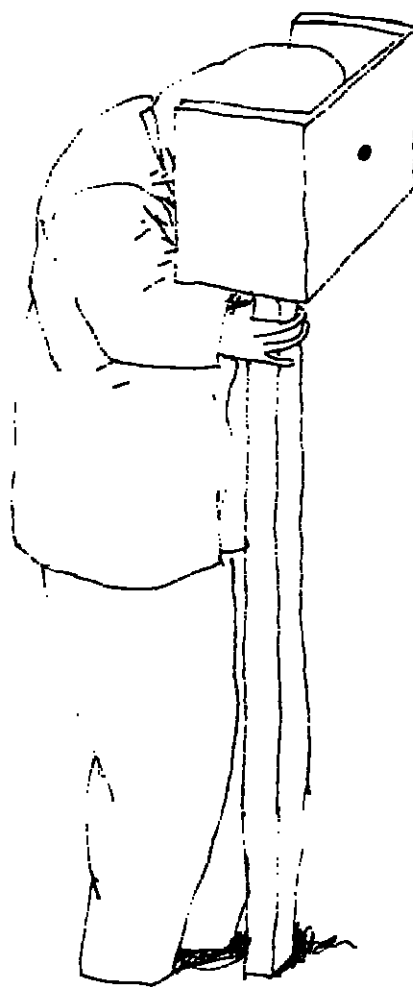
The new freedoms this change unleashed became the catalyst for the resurgence of long suppressed ethnic and nationalist rivalries. What had been constructed as a network of nations, the handiwork of the superpowers, turned out to be a patchwork of ethnic groups. Majorities found themselves transmogrified into newly disenfranchised minorities and vice versa. In the absence of grand, superpower strategies, the management of conflict—rather than the resolution of conflict—became the alternative to rampant disorder and chaos. The small step forward, shepherded by the mediator, took the place of the master plan imposed by the superpower.

Undoubtedly, South Africa is the beacon of hope in this regard. After 300 years of colonial rule and almost 50 years of apartheid, blacks and whites, recog-

nizing that neither could win a decisive military victory, that a peoples' revolution would weaken but not destroy the apartheid regime, that repression did not work, that economic and isolation from the rest of the world was taking a creeping toll, committed themselves to a peaceful resolution of their differences and the birth of a new South Africa. After several years of on-again, off-again negotiations, they made their peace.

As we proceed into the uncertain future, South Africa is a symbol of what can be achieved when parties to a conflict commit themselves to the process of negotiation, when they allow the principles of mediation to define the process. The outlines of how we must behave with respect to each other are in place. Now it is a matter of building the infrastructure to support it. ☐

PADRAIG O'MALLEY IS THE AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS ON DIVIDED SOCIETIES. HE IS CURRENTLY A SENIOR FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS' MCCORMACK INSTITUTE.



Silent diplomat of choice

Channel to peace runs through Norway

By Peter Beck

Norway has come a long way from its Viking days, when the men who set out from its fjords in their longboats were feared and hated throughout Europe and Asia Minor. Today, Norway has become the silent diplomat of choice, its mediation skills widely recognized by quarreling states and nations wracked by civil war.

The roots of what is now characterized as the "Norwegian model" of international peace negotiations—getting opponents together and talking without trying to dictate the agenda—are over a century old. In the process of regaining their independence from Sweden and establishing an economy based on trade, the Norwegians embraced the ideals of neutrality, respect for human rights and peaceful cooperation between countries.

The Swede Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prizes, recognized in 1894 that these ideals had permeated Norwegian culture. For that reason, he gave Norway the responsibility for the Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies instead of his native Sweden. Nobel also hoped that by doing this, it would help Norway regain its independence from Sweden without the two neighboring nations declaring war. His hope was realized in 1905.

Since World War II, when Norway's neutrality was ignored by Nazi Germany, there has been a consensus among all major Norwegian political parties in regard to foreign policy and security issues. A member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Norway has staunchly supported the United Nations—Norway's Trygve Lie was the UN's first Secretary General—and the country's 4 million inhabitants have been active participants in several of the UN-sponsored peacekeeping forces.

Norway's modern role as international peace-broker took off in earnest in the early 1990s under a succession of the Labor Party government's foreign ministers: Thorvald Stoltenberg, the late Johan Jorgen Holst and Bjorn

▶ OUT OF TROUBLE PAGE 2



Conflict resolved: South Africa's F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, who negotiated a peaceful end to the apartheid system of racial segregation

with a cruel but ironic equality: we are all at risk from one another.

The evidence is everywhere. Nomadic, weather-beaten Afghans astride their mountain-mules shooting down Soviet helicopters with shoulder-held surface-to-air missiles. Factions of the hapless Somalis, perhaps numbering in the hundreds, driving the United Nations—and the United States—out of the illusory resemblance of a country. Chechen guerrillas humbling the Russian army. Twilight terrorists blasting 747s out of the sky at 30,000 or

competing claims of diversity and multi-culturalism on every level has made the idea of "winners" and "losers" irrelevant, especially in the international arena. There, the loser can always wreak sufficient havoc to make the winner's claim to victory a hollow boast.

This is a relatively new phenomenon. In the "bad" old days, matters were—in a way—much more simple, as well as being a lot less hospitable to the mediator's art. The two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet

Internationally recognized Harvard program has a local side Gangs talk their way out of trouble

By Wilson Wanene

THIS PAST MAY Theodore Johnson conducted a faculty and staff meeting at Boston's Roxbury Community College. During a break, a middle-aged African-American woman came up and, to his surprise, shook his hand and thanked him. He had saved her son's life, she claimed.

"It's not often that someone can say something that instantly puts me to tears," recalls Johnson, a program manager at Conflict Management Group (CMG). To him, the incident was a watershed, one that ranked alongside graduation, getting married, the birth of his first child and winning his first case as a lawyer.

The woman had an 18-year-old son who had attended 38 gang-related funerals in three years. She became convinced that the two would become yet another victim of the deadly violence that is commonplace among young people in inner-city America. According to the Boston Police Department 40 percent of the murders last year—38 of 96—took place in Roxbury, which is predominantly made up of African-Americans and other peo-

ple of African descent. For Johnson, this sobering moment between him and the mother was proof that his mediation-centered youth community program, the Roxbury Conflict Resolution Project, was making a difference.

"The fundamental similarity between Roxbury and South Africa is that in each case the importance is not a 'solution' but rather that the people be-

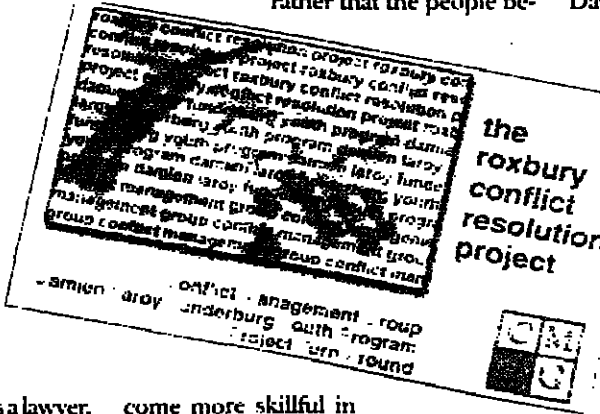
come more skillful in dealing with whatever problem comes along," explains Roger Fisher, Samuel Williston Professor of Law emeritus at Harvard Law School and a founder and board member of CMG.

"In this complex world there are always differences of perceptions, values and interests. Our future lies in treating those differences as a shared problem, to be shared side by side," Fisher observes. Whether a dispute involves two street gangs in an American city or a change from white rule to a multi-racial government in South Africa, to Fisher they have

one thing in common: a settlement will require getting each side to understand the other's interests. Fisher's work for the Harvard Negotiation Project, which he also founded and directs, has seen him play various influential roles in well-publicized conflict cases requiring mediation (or negotiation, as he refers to it) ranging from the Camp David summit between Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, and US president Jimmy Carter; the Iranian hostage crisis; the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit; and talks between the former South African government and the African National Congress.

The Roxbury project, a three-year pilot program funded mostly by the Hitachi Foundation, is in its second year. It has designed a conflict resolution curriculum for peer leaders who serve as intermediaries between CMG staff members and youngsters in the Roxbury neighborhood. CMG's approach is to work within the community as a whole, collaborating with other programs and groups.

"I spent a lot of time as a prosecutor trying to work for justice from inside the system and there are many decent people inside the system doing the same thing," says Johnson, referring to his 17 years as a state prosecutor in Orange County.



Timetables are imperative

South Africa's experience has taught us many valuable lessons, which if applied in the appropriate way to conflicts in other countries can provide a compass to guide us in an uncertain world.

- There should be transparency and openness in the mediating process.
- "Outsiders" can play an important, albeit limited role. However, while they may act as "honest brokers," they cannot usurp the place of the mediators—who must come from the parties in conflict—nor can they impose settlements. If they do, they only plant the seeds of further discord.
- Progress will come only when parties to the conflict learn to start trusting each other. Without trust, there can be no compromise. Parties must put themselves in the shoes of their protagonists. In the end, successful negotiations are not so much about bringing your community along with you, as it is helping your protagonists bring their communities along with them.
- At every level, negotiations should involve the inherent risk of compromise. Each compromise—and its attendant concessions—is a building block. As parties grow to trust each other and move from one compromise to the next, each develops a stake in seeing the other succeed. A sum of mutual investments develops, which provides the cushion when it comes to the "crunch" issues.
- The concept of "sufficient consensus" should be defined flexibly as that level of consensus that keeps the process from breaking down and allows it to move on to the next stage.
- Timetables are imperative. They concentrate minds, and forcing participants to meet deadlines encourages compromise—especially when progress has been made on a number of fronts—rather than risking the loss of progress made up to that point.
- All parties must feel an equal ownership in the process, something that is unlikely to happen if governments impose the mediation process.

—By Padraig O'Malley

WILSON WANENE IS A BOSTON-BASED FREE-LANCE WRITER.

A willingness to share blame and negotiate solutions avoids lawsuits

Car crash culture reveals the self-reliant and street smart

Collision in Japan results in amicable settlement

By Crocker Snow Jr.

GETTING IN AN AUTO accident in Japan reveals the country's peculiar efficiency, bureaucracy, social responsibility, sense of grace and preference for negotiation over confrontation. That's what it revealed to me and my family in 1972 following a near tragic accident outside a little shipping port of 40,000, some 150 miles due west of Tokyo.

The fault—to make it perfectly clear—lay in this corner alone. In this case, on a family sightseeing excursion along the sea of Japan coastline, we missed a hard-to-see stop sign on a back country road at the edge of a village and were creamed broadside by an oncoming dump truck.

The upshot was a wrecked car, three screaming young sons, a rattled farmer whose old house was the final backstop for our careening car, and a distraught but uninjured teenage truck driver.

Within five minutes of the collision, police were on the scene, taking pictures, chalking the accident outline, exchanging papers and cleaning up the debris. A minute behind them came an ambulance to whisk the two worst wounded boys away to the larger Naotsu hospital for the necessary stitches and repairs.

Fully seven hours of that day were spent at the Naotsu police station, filling out forms, passing of papers, being interviewed and struggling manfully with

the language problem. Finally, Chief Inspector Saito advised that it was time for my wife (since she was the driver) to compose her formal *gomennasai* (I'm sorry) letter to all concerned, which serves as our version of events.

But the good inspector was bothered by one thing in the final draft—my wife Robin's explanation that she ran the stop sign quite simply because she didn't see it.

'The way I see it, your blame is about this much,' said Inspector Saito, motioning to a gallon water bottle in the corner.

'The truck driver's blame is about that much (pointing to a Coke bottle).'

Ah so, he puzzled, she has driven for 14 years without an accident. She has driven three or four years in Japan and is familiar with our rules and road signs. Then she must have been distracted by the children in the back seat, or the cat, or you? Perhaps she was admiring the scenery?

No in fact she just missed it. The apparent deadlock was broken only with a sudden news of a second

accident, which, it turned out, had occurred in just the same place and in the same way. The same stop sign had been missed and the same farm house had been hit; this time, unfortunately, the driver was badly hurt.

A hasty return to the scene showed what most of us by this time suspected; the stop sign was truly difficult to see. Coming off a freshly paved road at unaccustomed speed, the driver was faced with a triangular red sign almost invisible against the backdrop of a larger roof behind it. Inspector Saito opined that perhaps a stop light would be necessary. The shell-shocked farmer, whose old house had been twice hit now in the same day, could only agree.

Still, the most revealing part of the whole episode was yet to occur. Back at the police station estimates had come in on the car, truck and house, as well as the doctor's bills. These costs were to any American ours to bear.

But the Japanese don't see it this way. In their carefully constructed society, full guilt is to be avoided.

"The way I see it, your blame is about this much," said Inspector Saito, motioning to a gallon water bottle in the corner. "The truck driver's blame is about that much (pointing to a Coke bottle)."

Protestations notwithstanding, all that remained was the formal negotiations for financing the necessary repairs.

The insurance man first offered to pay 20 percent of all costs "because you



A negotiation waiting to happen? In the US, a lawsuit is more likely.

are a foreigner and unfamiliar with the road." When we reached an amicable settlement, with me paying for the damage to children, car and farmhouse, and he for his truck, a beaming Inspector Saito reappeared to endorse the "no fault" arrangement.

Bows were exchanged. Personal cards were exchanged. It was Japan's unique brand of blameless accident insurance, all the way around. ☺

CROCKER SNOW JR. IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *The WorldPaper*.

Egypt's judges, juries and mediators

By Omar Younes

JUST A SHORT TIME ago, dodging in an out of rapidly closing traffic gaps along Cairo's Corniche, I happened to err slightly. The result: a minor black eye to the headlight of my well-scarred tank of a Volvo, a severely damaged Peugeot—and a lesson in mediation.

Ingrained in every Egyptian is the desire to argue and a willingness to be entertained by argument. The heated debate, immediately following my assault on the resplendent Peugeot, was happily mediated by almost every person within the square block. All were united in the belief that the two sides should talk things out and reach an agreement. Mohamed, a buck-toothed boab (doorman), acted as the plaintiff's negotiator. Abdu, an obese man with a booming voice, interrupted a stroll with his fiancée to be lead bargainer for the defense.

The negotiations were not to determine right or wrong, for it was obvious I was at fault. It was to determine how much I should compensate Mr. Peugeot—on the spot, of course. And for the love of a good verbal joust. No police involved, no insurance claim filled out, no violence, only two arguments and a large interactive jury present to settle the dispute. It ended with a handshake in less than an hour, since we all had to return to our different "businesses."

This form of mediating minor traffic disputes, though imperfect, provides an invaluable service. Cairo is a teeming city of 18 million which has an enormous traffic problem. If every minor traffic accident had to go through the same channels as in other countries, the fabled Egyptian bureaucracy would swell even further—if that's imaginable—and the unfortunate crash victim would have no chance for soap box compensation. ☺

OMAR YOUNES IS ASSISTANT TO *The WorldPaper's* PUBLISHER.



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OUT OF TROUBLE

Continued from page 1

California before he joined CMG. "I now think I can do more by empowering people outside the system." His project started off with three peer leaders—one of them was the teenager whose mother thanked Johnson—who worked with 20 young people using rap, film, skits, games, and personal stories to help them change attitudes towards themselves and others.

CMG staffers and the peer leaders try to deal with issues that are central to the youngsters' lives such as their identity, their yearning for safety, their desire to be respected and to reach their potential. The idea is to help the youngsters realize that they have control over their lives and can deal with—rather than react to—events. These youngsters are then expected to train others. The goal is to have

about 15 trainees each of whom, within three years, can in turn conduct workshops for groups of about 25.

Founded in 1984, CMG is a non-profit, non-partisan consulting firm, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which aims to improve negotiation, conflict resolution and cooperative decision making techniques—honed at Harvard Law School—and encourage their use.

In doing so, claims Fisher, the idea is not for CMG staffers to act as judges but as facilitators who can nudge disputing parties to listen to and understand each other. CMG also works closely with the Pro-

gram on Negotiation at Harvard Law School and the Harvard Negotiation Project, tapping into the expertise of specialists—from both inside and outside Harvard—such as Fisher, who is co-author of

"We are willing to use money from Norway's foreign aid budget as a 'risk capital' to create peace—knowing all too well the enormous costs of healing the wounds of war"

Channel to Peace
Continued from page 1

Tore Godal. The best known instance is Norway's role as mediator in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict during 1993—the "Oslo Channel" has become a universal expression. What is not so well known is that Norway played an important role in solving the difficult question of allocating water

between the Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians.

Norway has played a similar role as the mediator between Guatemala's military regime for the URNG guerrillas. Once agreements on refugee and human rights questions have been reached, the two opposing sides will be coming to Oslo to sign a cease-fire agreement.

Early last year Norway, the Netherlands and Canada were asked by the Tamil guerrillas and the government of Sri Lanka to be observers of their cease-fire (which subsequently broke down). Thorvald Stoltenberg, Norway's ambassador to Denmark, worked as the UN's peace mediator in the former Yugoslavia. Even Colombia, suffering through an growing struggle between the government of narcotics financed guerrillas, has

asked Norway to assist it.

"We have been asked to mediate actively or to prepare for peace negotiations on several occasions," says the Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Egeland. "Many times when we feel that we cannot play an effective role, we have to say no," he adds.

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avoiding it in the first place."

Another feature of the "Norwegian model" of peace mediation is the willingness to use—and ability to use effectively—non-governmental organizations such as FAFO (Trade Union Research Center) and Norwegian Church Aid.

A few Norwegians are asking if their country has become too involved in the peace making process, but the Foreign Ministry points out that peace negotiations only take a small portion of their limited resources. Their main task—which consumes 90 percent of their time and money—is looking after the interests of Norway.

Outside observers say this increased role in peace negotiations has strengthened the country's self-awareness and

pride. Some people have even come to Norway to learn more about the "Norwegian Model." Norwegians themselves believe this marriage of mediation and foreign policy has given their country's values a role on an international stage usually reserved for bigger nations—even if that role is behind the scenes. ☺

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PETER BECK IS A REPORT

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

De nouveaux contacts entre la Jordanie et le Koweït

Le Premier ministre jordanien Abdelkarim Kabariti a reçu cette semaine un appel téléphonique du ministre koweïtien des Affaires étrangères cheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al Sabah, dans un nouveau contact entre Amman et Koweït qui n'ont pas normalisé leurs relations depuis la guerre du Golfe. Cet entretien a porté sur la situation politique de la région. M. Kabariti (notre photo) a félicité cheikh Sabah pour sa reconduction au poste de vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Affaires étrangères, après la formation du nouveau cabinet koweïtien. Totalement inexistant depuis 1990, les contacts entre responsables jordaniens et koweïtiens se sont multipliés ces derniers mois, avec notamment l'échange de messages entre M. Kabariti et le prince héritier et chef du gouvernement koweïtien, cheikh Saïd al-Abdallah Al Sabah. Le Koweït est néanmoins le seul pays du Golfe à n'avoir pas normalisé ses relations avec la Jordanie en raison de sa position jugée favorable à l'Irak durant la crise du Golfe. La Jordanie a pris ses distances depuis l'été 1995 avec le régime irakien, en accueillant pendant 6 mois le gendre du président irakien Saddam Hussein, le général Hussein Kamel Hassan, assassiné en février dernier après son retour volontaire en Irak.

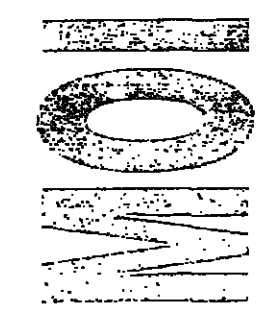


Presse

L'hebdo Abed Rabbo joue avec les mots contre les maux

Le samedi est devenu depuis quelques semaines le jour d'Abed Rabbo en Jordanie. Cet hebdomadaire satirique connaît en effet un succès grandissant dans le royaume hachémite grâce à son style assez décapant contre les hommes politiques et le gouvernement. Si aucune censure officielle ne s'est encore faite entendre, beaucoup de Jordaniens protestent eux contre cet hebdomadaire qu'ils jugent diffamatoire.

SELON



Partant vers une nouvelle étape de sa vie, il se dirige vers la porte 62 de l'aéroport d'Orly Sud aux interminables couloirs dont il est devenu, avec les années, un des familiers. A sa grande surprise, il apprend que le vol pour Amman n'aura aujourd'hui qu'un léger retard.

En franchissant la porte de l'Airbus, il découvre une équipe entièrement jordanienne, souriante, sans la trace de ces blonds qu'il trouvait peu aimables.

Arrivant à Amman, il pénètre dans un aéroport très modernisé où les écrans d'affichage fonctionnent bien et où les annonces sont audibles. Un porteur bien habillé emmène ses valises vers un taxi propre et neuf qui le conduira chez lui. Le chauffeur, en costume et bien rasé ne fume pas et a à côté de lui une plaque d'interdiction de fumer.

Sur les ondes de la radio, il entend des gens instruits modestes au lieu de ces Socrates de l'antenne qui prenaient les Jordaniens pour une poignée d'ignorants.

Tout au long du trajet, l'étonnement marque son visage en découvrant des routes sans fossé avec des arbres entre la double voie et des voitures respectant la limitation de vitesse.

En pénétrant dans la capitale, il en croit à peine ses yeux: les gens conduisent en respectant les priorités, traversent sur les passages piétons et marchent sur des trottoirs bien aménagés et non pas entre les véhicules. Les ralentisseurs sauvages ont disparu et les conducteurs, d'un calme exemplaire, ne s'énervent pas, ne klaxonnent pas et sourient à leurs voisins de feux rouges où les enfants ne mendient plus.

Chez lui, sa mère n'a invité que la famille proche et ne cesse de répéter qu'elle suit, comme toutes les voisines, les instructions du ministère de la Santé et ne cuisinent plus que des plats sans cholestérol ou triglycérides.

Les cousins ne cessent d'énumérer les bonnes œuvres du gouvernement au service de la nation et son écrasante victoire sur le chômage, la corruption et le déficit extérieur. Ils lui apprennent que tous les citoyens peuvent désormais bénéficier de la sécurité sociale.

Rempli de joie, il apprend que désormais le tribalisme n'est qu'un vague souvenir du passé et que les députés sont élus grâce à leurs compétences et leur talent, les ministres étant eux un échantillon représentatif de l'élite du pays.

A la télé, il constate que la disparition des stupides feuilletons égyptiens destinés à propager le retard et l'inculture dans les neurones des Jordaniens, et que des documentaires intellectuels présentés par des jeunes modestes et cultivés ont pris la relève.

Dans les journaux hebdomadaires, il ne lit que des articles responsables s'intéressant aux préoccupations des citoyens, et remarque, sans mécontentement, que les photos osées ne figurent plus en dernière page.

Sur les ondes du poste de radio voisin, une voix fredonne ces jolis mots de Ziyad Rahabani, fils de Fayrouz: «Dors petit et rêve qu'au petit matin tu te réveilleras et que ton pays sera devenu un pays parfait».

Il se frotte les yeux et se prépare alors à reprendre sa vie monotone. ■

Souhail Al Sweis

Abed Rabbo est un nouveau journal satirique en Jordanie qui comprend une vingtaine de pages. Il accorde une grande place à la caricature et au photo-montage. Créé voilà trois mois, cet hebdomadaire a accueilli pour la première fois une page en anglais cette semaine.

Au fil de ses pages, *Abed Rabbo* décrit la vie quotidienne des ministres et des hommes politiques jordaniens. Le journal fait aussi des interviews avec des hommes politiques abordant des sujets sérieux d'une manière légère. Des interviews sont aussi accordées à des animaux pour traiter de sujets d'actualité. Par exemple, après la récente décision du gouvernement d'augmenter le prix de pain et du fourrage, le rédacteur en chef de cet hebdomadaire, Youssef Gheishan,

a accordé une interview à un mouton qui exprimait sa rage contre la diminution de son repas essentiel. Une autre était elle réalisée avec un pot de yaourt de Kérak. Des photo-montages présentent eux les portraits des ministres actuels sur des corps de bêtes. Et en dernière page, la liste des correspondants du journal réunit à la fois Hussein Kamal, correspondant en enfer, et le général Mobutu, correspondant dans la vallée du Jourdain.

«Nous sommes le journal hebdomadaire le plus vendu et le plus lu en Jordanie», affirme aujourd'hui Youssef Gheishan. Pour lui, *Abed Rabbo* essaie d'offrir le moyen d'alléger la pression économique et politique qui pèse sur les épaules du simple citoyen. «Comme il n'y a pas la possibilité de remplacer ou d'affronter

les responsables du pays, nous permettons au moins au citoyen de rigoler. Nous essayons de briser la barrière psychologique qui existe entre les citoyens et les hommes politiques en utilisant notamment des photo-montages amusants».

En s'appuyant sur la caricature et la photo, *Abed Rabbo* cherche à critiquer le monde politique en soulignant ses fautes. Un genre journalistique nouveau pour la Jordanie qui a des conséquences importantes pour la vie démocratique, estime Youssef Gheishan.

«Les journaux satiriques sont les journaux les plus dangereux. Ils anéantissent le prestige et l'importance des responsables et inconsidérément permettent aux simples citoyens d'apprivoiser leurs dirigeants».

Selon Youssef Gheishan, le gouvernement doit aujourd'hui s'adapter à cette écriture satirique. «Les responsables doivent peu à peu tolérer les farces».

Youssef Gheishan considère qu'il doit mettre l'accent dans son journal sur les actions négatives des personnes publiques. «Parce que les positives, tous les journaux en parlent».

Repousser la censure

Abed Rabbo, qui a une distribution de 26000 exemplaires par semaine, connaît depuis son lancement une campagne grandissante de protestation, notamment sur le réseau Internet. Neiz, qui est une compagnie jordanienne de service pour la messagerie électronique en anglais, a ouvert un

débat sur *Abed Rabbo*, demandant à ses abonnés de s'exprimer ouvertement.

«En tant que Jordaniens, nous avons des principes et des traditions que nous avons appris au fil des ans. Le gouvernement n'est pas obligé de nous définir les lignes qu'il ne faut pas dépasser», écrit Hussein Awad, un des abonnés de Neiz.

«Les éditeurs de cet hebdomadaire doivent naturellement respecter les limites et ne pas profiter de la démocratie et de la liberté abusivement. Il faut critiquer mais ne pas arriver au point de diffamer».

Cette allusion à la diffamation se réfère aux nombreux photo-montages qui présentent notamment les ministres sur des corps de bêtes ou transforment cette semaine Jacques Chirac en bédouin.

Youssef Gheishan redoute d'ailleurs que les personnalités visées finissent par trouver le moyen juridique d'attaquer *Abed Rabbo* en justice pour cette utilisation de leur image.

«La ligne rouge de la censure est loin dans l'horizon pour ce journal. Et s'il y en a une, on va essayer de la repousser», affirme Youssef Gheishan. Pour lui, une telle volonté de censure montre que beaucoup ne sont pas encore conscients de ce qu'est la démocratie. Pour lui, le terrorisme intellectuel de soit-disant défenseurs des droits de l'Homme, est alors quelques fois plus sévère que celui du gouvernement.

Il y a quelques semaines, trois hommes costauds ont attaqué Youssef Gheishan devant le journal. «Je crois qu'ils étaient envoyés par un des responsables politiques dont nous avons

parlé une fois dans le journal», explique Youssef Gheishan.

«Comme tout ce que nous avons écrit était vrai, il ne pouvait pas faire autrement». Gheishan a aussi reçu des lettres menaçant de le tuer. «Je m'attendais à pire».

plaisante Youssef Gheishan. Sur son travail, Youssef Gheishan confirme que le journal ne vise pas à humilier les politiques. Un des abonnés du Neiz, Samer Farraj, confie que le journal ne vise pas à humilier les politiques. Un des abonnés du Neiz, Samer Farraj, confie que le journal ne vise pas à humilier les politiques.

Youssef Gheishan cultive la haine et entretient les divisions entre les Jordaniens. La liberté d'expression normalement doit s'arrêter quand elle commence à insulter les autres».

Dans une réponse envoyée sur Internet, le ministre de l'Information Marwan Mouasher estime lui que seul la population peut juger de la poursuite ou non de cette publication.

C'est-à-dire tant que cette publication connaîtra un important succès qui lui permet de survivre économiquement. ■

Oroub El Abed



Jacques Chirac en vedette

La dernière édition d'*Abed Rabbo* consacre une large place à la visite en Jordanie du président Jacques Chirac. Les rédacteurs de ce journal ont imaginé la visite de M. Chirac dans leurs locaux, affublé pour l'occasion de l'habit traditionnel bédouin. Une visite au cours de laquelle Jacques Chirac aurait insisté sur l'importance de la langue française en Jordanie.

Un accord aurait d'ailleurs été conclu selon lequel *Abed Rabbo* aurait accepté la publication d'une page hebdomadaire en français en échange d'une page dans le quotidien *Le Monde*. ■

Cinéma

L'histoire de Sindbad le Jordanien

Le tournage du film «Sindbad, la bataille des chevaliers de l'ombre» se termine actuellement en Jordanie. Un long-métrage inspiré du conte des Mille et une nuits qui devrait offrir une belle publicité au royaume hachémite.

«Comme il était impossible de tourner à Bagdad où se déroule la vraie histoire, de Sindbad on a voulu tourner au Maroc», explique Alan Mehraz, réalisateur, scénariste et producteur du film. «Mais Frank Stallone, frère de la vedette des films d'action Sylvester Stallone et conseiller du prince Abdallah, nous a proposé la Jordanie. Nous avons visité le pays, rencontré le prince Abdallah et des professionnels pour discuter du projet et on a alors pensé que le site correspondait tout à fait à nos besoins».

Le tournage a débuté voilà quelques semaines, se déplaçant un peu partout dans le pays. «On espère montrer au public du monde entier les principaux sites touristiques jordaniens», souligne Alan Mehraz. «Quand on a décidé de tourner un film au Proche-Orient, de nombreuses personnes ont refusé de travailler avec nous. A mon avis, le film devrait corriger l'image négative de la région dans l'esprit de beaucoup d'Américains».

Ce film raconte l'histoire de Sindbad, qui vient délivrer son pays des envahisseurs, triomphe de ses ennemis et finit par épouser sa bien-aimée Schéhérazade. Une histoire qui amène le héros à passer successivement par Pétra, Jérusalem, le Wadi Rum, les châteaux d'Ajlun et de Kérak.

En dehors des retombées touristiques que devrait avoir ce film, cette initiative devrait aussi être intéressante pour bon nombre d'hommes d'affaires jordaniens qui ont participé au projet. L'équipe du film comprend 140 personnes, de nationalités américaines, anglaises, israéliennes et jordaniennes.

Les acteurs du film, sont eux tous Américains.

Certaines scènes en extérieur tournées en Jordanie ont demandé plus de 150 figurants. Mais les plus importantes, avec parfois plus de 15.000 figurants, ont eu lieu en Chine, où Sindbad débute son périple. «Le ministère du Tourisme a assuré lui-même le soutien technique sur certains sites et nous a accordé les autorisations pour tourner en extérieur», poursuit Alan Mehraz.

«Le seul problème que l'on a rencontré, concernait les touristes», explique Alan Mehraz. «A part cela, tout était parfait. Le pays est formidable et tout le monde a été serviable. On pense sérieusement répéter l'expérience dans un autre film ou même faire une série de films dans le royaume».

En attendant la sortie du film prévue pour le printemps 1997, la Jordanie peut donc espérer devenir un jour la Star Hollywood. ■

Monn Qaddoumi

La petite star d'Hollywood

Quelques noms connus s'inscrivent au générique de ce film. Ainsi Richard Greco, rendu célèbre par la série télévisée américaine 21 Jump street, incarnera le rôle de Sindbad.

«C'est la première fois que l'on montre un Sindbad brun», souligne Alan Mehraz. Le rôle féminin sera lui tenu par Lissa Russell qui a elle aussi participé à plusieurs séries télévisées. Mickey Rooney sera le do-

L'équipe du film en tournage en Jordanie

Monn Qaddoumi



Youssef Gheishan, directeur de la publication satirique *Abed Rabbo*, interviewant un chien de la bourgeoisie jurant de défendre ses privilèges jusqu'à la mort.

Bilan

Des outils pour renforcer la présence française

La visite qu'a effectuée le président français Jacques Chirac en Jordanie devrait permettre de renforcer la présence de la France en Jordanie dans plusieurs domaines. Au niveau éducatif, tout d'abord, avec l'annonce par Jacques Chirac de la réévaluation de l'enseignement du français, et au niveau économique, avec la signature d'un protocole financier d'environ 90 millions de francs.

Les accords signés et les décisions prises par le président Chirac permettent de dresser un bilan positif de sa visite en Jordanie. Outre l'impression remarquable que le chef de l'Etat français a laissée aux officiels jordaniens, les relations franco-jordaniennes vont certainement témoigner de progrès importants dans l'avenir.

La décision du roi Hussein d'accepter de mettre le français et l'anglais sur le même pied d'égalité dans le système éducatif jordanien est très importante. «Je suis persuadé que cette décision a été prise de bon cœur des responsables français, et je suis sûr, de l'opinion publique française», a déclaré Jacques Chirac devant le Parlement. Il reste désormais à mettre au système éducatif jordanien à s'adapter pour permettre aux élèves d'apprendre cette langue dans de meilleures conditions.

«Notre coopération est excellente et amicale», a insisté le président français. Des propos renforcés par le roi Hussein: «Nous sommes fiers de nos relations».

Au niveau économique, cette visite a permis la signature d'un protocole financier d'un montant d'environ 90 millions de francs. Une somme qui permettra la réalisation de cinq grands projets en Jordanie. Au cours de la conférence de presse qu'il a donnée en compagnie du roi Hussein, Jacques Chirac s'est aussi réjoui de la prochaine signature d'un accord d'association entre l'Union européenne et la Jordanie.

Sur le plan politique, cette visite a été dominée par les déclarations du président Chirac sur la situation en Irak. «Nous connaissons en Irak une situation indigne des temps modernes. (...) Cette situation est

inacceptable sur le plan humanitaire et dangereuse sur le plan politique pour la stabilité de la région. (...) Il faut donc tout faire pour éviter que ce drame ne continue plus», a déclaré Jacques Chirac, ajoutant qu'il souhaitait une application rapide de la résolution 986 dite «pétrole contre nourriture».

Au cours de ses entretiens en Jordanie, Jacques Chirac a réitéré son souhait de voir la France «avoir une présence forte dans la région». «Notre amitié pour le monde arabe, notre amitié pour Israël, notre conception de nos responsabilités dans cette partie du monde commandent une présence forte de la France». De son côté, le roi Hussein a lui appelé les Européens à jouer un rôle «actif» dans le processus de paix, mais à la condition qu'ils soient conciliants avec les efforts américains.

Enfin, Jacques Chirac a tenu à saluer dans le discours qu'il a prononcé devant le parlement jordanien l'image de tolérance qu'offre le royaume hachémite. Il a dénoncé les «arguments de tous ceux qui brandissent la menace d'une confrontation inéluctable entre les cultures et les religions (...)». Islam, chrétienté, et judaïsme ont vocation à se retrouver partout, et d'abord autour de la Méditerranée.

Un message qui semblait autant s'adresser aux habitants de la région qu'aux Français qui doivent eux aussi «se garder des amalgames hâtifs et dangereux».

Le Jourdain



Jacques Chirac lors de son discours jeudi dernier devant le Parlement jordanien.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Danse

Le ballet du Nord se produira le 3 novembre à 20h00 au Centre culturel royal. Deux chorégraphes sont au programme: «El canto de despedida» et «Gisèle ou le mensonge romantique». Venant du nord de la France, cette compagnie rassemble 24 danseurs et danseuses sous la direction de Maryse Delente.

Vidéo

Cycle Simone Signoret. «La mort en ce jardin», le 4 novembre à 20h30 au Centre culturel français (CCF).

Photographie

«Basma Asfour». Une série de clichés sur Paris et ses habitants de la photographe jordanienne Basma Asfour qui a longtemps vécu dans la capitale française. A partir du 6 novembre au CCF.

Activities

Royal Cultural Centre	6610267	Concord Cinema	677420
American Centre Library	820101	Plaza Cinema	692238
British Council	6361478	Philadelphia Cinema	634144
French Cultural Centre	637009		
Goethe Institute	641993		
Corvantes Institute (Spanish)	610858		
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777		
Haya Arts Centre	641793		
Y.W.C.A.	641793		
Y.W.M.A.	641793		
Dar al Funun	643252		
Alia Art Gallery	639303		
Badana Art Gallery	657132		
Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	675571		
Nabil & Hisham's Theatre	625155		

Sports Clubs

Al Hussein Sports City	6671815
Orthodox Club	810491
Royal Automobile Club	815410
Royal Shooting Club	736572
Royal Chess Club	673713
Royal Racing Club	09-801233
Jordan Bridge Club	676990
Amman Mun. Library	636111
Univ. of Jordan Library	843555
R.S.C.N.	837931/837937

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Awqaf & Islamic Affairs	666141	Planning	644466
Culture / Jabal Amman	636391	Post & Communications	624301
Education & Higher Education	669181	Public Health	665131
Energy & Mineral Resources	815615	Public Works & Housing	668481
Finance	636321	Social Development	673191
Foreign Affairs	644361	Supplies	603211
Industry & Trade	663191	Tourism & Antiquities	642311
Information	641467	Transport	641461
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Justice	663101	Youth / University	604701

Diplomatic Corps

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Austrian	644635
Bahraini	664148/9
Brazilian	642183
Belgian	675683
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Canadian	666124
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Czech	671813/666135
Danish Consulate Gen	603703
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Greek	671331/2
Hungarian	815611
Icelandic Consulate	698851
Indian	637362
Indonesian	828911
Iranian	639331
Italian	638185
Japanese	672486/7
Kuwaiti	671357/8
Libyan	693101/3
Lebanese	641381
Moroccan	641451
Netherlands	637967/625165
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North Korean	666349
Norwegian Embassy	644932/4
Omani	686155
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Palestine	677517
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Aljazeera (Air Yemen)	653691
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Polish Airlines	625981
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Scandinavian Airlines	604499
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Al-Bashir, Ashrafieh	775112/6
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Amal Hospital	674155
Army, Marka	891611/15
Husseini Medical Centre	813813
Italian-Al-Muhagreen	777101/3
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Khaled Maternity	642811/6
Khalas, J. Amman	636141
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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Make an 'Internet' international call, at a local rate: Long distance calling costs, no more!

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

THE RHETORIC on the world becoming a shrinking global village hasn't been exceptionally convincing in the past. People always wondered why it would cost so much to make a telephone call from one side of this "village" to another.

However, one development on the Internet lends more credibility to the "Global Village" paradigm, propagated by technology media during the past decade. The advent of the Internet-voice changes forever the landscape of voice communications and promises to put all humans—or at least those of them with Internet access—within "talking" distance!

Just as inter-connected servers are used to relay email, download files and exchange web requests; they are also being used for telephony between two distant people, through computers connected to the Internet.

Thus, a long distance real time telephone call can be made between any computers in the world at the cost of only the local telephone calls made by the conversing couple, to their respective local Internet Service Providers.

To enable this, both users should be using software called Internet phones, that allows for voice to be sent over the Internet's TCP/IP protocol. The Internet phones also require hardware equipment such as 14.4 kbps or higher modems, speedy processors of at least 66

MHz as well as full duplex sound cards and their necessary drivers.

Since using Internet phones only involves a local phone call to the ISP in addition to the regular subscription fees for an Internet account, it is by far the

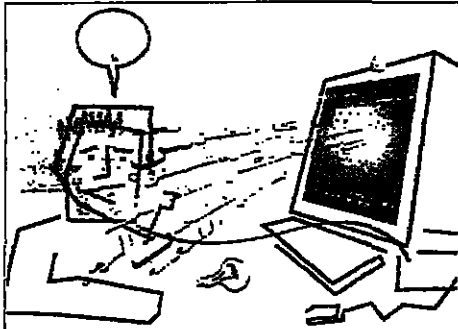
Internet and are connected at that time.

This directory of users is called the "Global OnLine Directory" or simply GOLD. All owners of Internet phones can register their names in GOLD so that they can be listed as accepting invitations for calls. It is also worthy of mention, that the Internet Phone Servers only serve in identifying persons addresses and availability and do not carry the actual voice messages which pass, like email, directly between the two "conversing" computers through varying numbers of intermediary servers.

This makes tracing these calls rather difficult, which enhances the security and privacy conditions of these calls. Moreover, most Internet phones software is available for both the Macintosh and the Windows platforms, which only strengthens its applicability.

Since Internet phones are merely software packages, the only cost associated with using them is the initial investment in buying the software and there are no extra "service" charges incurred. The simplicity and cost effectiveness of Internet telephony will surely harass the telecommunications companies which would see more and more of their customers turn to this new technology for their international calls. Of course issues such as quality and reliability may still weigh on the side of the traditional telecommunications department.

Whether this will evolve into an all out war between the



least expensive method to make international phone calls. All you need is to know the email or IP addresses of the people you're 'calling', so that the Internet phone can 'ring' for them. Of course, the people at the receiving end have to be equipped with Internet phones software and logged on at that particular time to be able to hear the ringing.

Many commercial companies such as Vocaltec (http://www.vocaltec.com) have begun to capitalize on this increasingly popular solution by developing and marketing innovative Internet phone software packages.

Alongside the Internet Phones, directory services appeared too; the Internet phone software utilizes what is referred to as "Internet phone server network" which provides names of users able to receive phone calls over the

Working for a brighter future for Arabic-users: Sakhr Software Arabizes the trends

SAKHR SOFTWARE is one of the top Arabic software development companies in the Arab World. The company leads the way for others to follow in areas related to Arabic linguistics as applied to computer applications.

Of course, Sakhr is also known for its continued stream of application and entertainment software.

Over the past two years, in particular, Sakhr stepped up its activities in software, by dropping its hardware range which consisted mainly of IBM PC compatibles, branded as Sakhr PCs.

The range of Sakhr Software is very large today, but there are some categories of products which stand out more than others. Religious software is a prominent category, with applications like the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Tradition and general Islamic education software, some aimed at children like 'Learning to Pray'.

As for business solutions, Sakhr Arabized Claris Works and named it 'Personal Office' (Al Maktab Al Shakhsi) which

provides a suite of Arabic applications under Windows. Business software from Sakhr includes Al Ustaz word-processor, a powerful application that is constantly upgraded by Sakhr, with unique features including Arabic spell checking and morphological analysis.

In the desk top publishing sector, Sakhr Desktop Publisher is well-known and was the first prominent Arabic DTP application for IBM PC & compatibles. Its latest versions incorporate impressive features that maintain its position among the top choices for DTP users.

Technologies that Sakhr pioneers include Arabic Optical Character Recognition (OCR), which in conjunction with Sakhr's databasing systems, completes the picture of ideal document management solutions, incor-

porating Sakhr applications at all stages for the purposes of producing, processing and archiving Arabic documents.

Focusing on linguistic technologies, Sakhr Software is revealing some new, exciting products in this field. These are geared towards a new environment which faces Arab users, that is the Internet.

Sakhr's latest product, 'Automatic Diacritization' provides diacritics (tashkeel) to Arabic words, therefore facilitating the semantic analysis, which is necessary for application of proper speech recognition and Internet searching, among other things.

Sakhr Software, with its long-term experience in developing Arabic software, is still leading the way for others to follow.

The extent of Sakhr's commitment is enormous. The company's future products, especially its Internet Arabic applications and tools, seem to hold even more promise.



News update

More organizations go for NETS Server solutions

● The British Council signed an agreement on 22 October with National Equipment and Technical Services (NETS) to install and maintain a corporate local and Internet email network.

The FirstClass groupware solution will provide users at the British Council with access to all the information and Conferences at NETS On Line. This agreement makes the number of Corporate groupware servers setup by NETS for similar purposes a total of nine. These include the American Embassy, Jordan Phosphates Mining Company, International Traders.

Internet Service Providers and telecommunications companies will remain to be seen. One thing is assured though, thanks to the Internet we are nearer to becoming the close members of the "Global Village."

email:

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Leading banks join the 'Arab Financial Network'

● The 'Arab Financial Network' project being jointly developed by Arabia On Line (AROL) and Business Optimization Consultants (BOC) is witnessing continuous expansion with more banking and financial institutions joining the network.

Recently, the Jordan Kuwait Bank and the Cairo Amman Bank became the most recent entrants into the network, joining the already existing banks including the Arab Bank and the Jordan National Bank.

The 'Arab Financial Network' aims to provide a pool of comprehensive information on different Arab financial

and banking institutions, facilitating the flow of information between them on the one hand, and from these institutions to the Internet-using public on the other.

EMC introduces Data Center

● East Mediterranean Center, a Jordanian company, announced its software package, Data Center, which provides comprehensive economic and commercial data on the Jordanian economy.

Data Center includes a directory of Jordanian companies and establishments. It also contains statistical and numeric information on the different sectors of Jordan's economy.

In addition, there is a comprehensive introduction to the Amman Financial Market (AFM). Version 1 comes on nine disks and is priced at \$100 (JD 70). For more information, contact EMC at telephone 691145.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Beware of the year '00'

IF YOU still don't know, the computer industry is bracing itself for a major crisis, coming up on the first of January, in the year 2000.

What will happen, on a worldwide scale, to almost every single computer in the world, is a 'date-mix up problem'.

To put it simply, check out your date line under DOS or Windows. It ends with a two-digit figure that resembles the year. It reads '96'. The problem is that in the year 2000, your computer date will read '00', in the year segment.

Why is that going to be a problem, you may wonder? Well, for one thing, over 95 percent of digital computer systems worldwide cannot accept the numbers '00' as part of the registered date. So you can imagine the absolutely unexpected software-behavior that may result. There could be massive data loss, sudden software failure or any other hazards. What compounds the problem is the fact that every aspect of modern life is run by some computer software program or another.

Obviously, the 'year 2000 problem' is no joke. Some people may suggest that two more digits are added in, making the year date read '2000' instead of '00', on every computer system and software application. Well, it's not that simple. The huge number of files and program lines which include the date will make it a very tough and costly task to track down every occurrence of the two-digit date. You would have to perform the change backwards, on previous dates registered throughout the 1900's.

Gartner Group, a research and consultancy firm, puts the costs of re-writing the lines that include the date at a whopping \$100 billion. It is too huge a cost for the re-writing technique to be widely adopted. Still, seeking help is a good idea and there are emerging specialists in the field of 'date-recovery'. Already, there are several consultancy companies in the United States that study the software situation in organizations, evaluate the different means to solve the problem and then select one for execution. In fact, one company in particular, called Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), has put together a 'year-2000-compatible' utility, which solves the problem straight off. D&B is currently updating its software tools that take care of the year 2000 problem.

So, the advice we would give all Jordanian companies who may face significant problems at the turn of the millennium, is to look around for software consultants to check out the extent of the problem. After all, you'll end up with more than just a big, fat zero; you'll actually have two on your screen!

Seven Internet service Providers in Jordan?

It looks like the Internet sector in Jordan is set to heat up in Jordan, according to *Al Hayat* Newspaper, a pan-Arab daily published in London.

A report in *Al Hayat* stated that six Jordanian companies have applied for an Internet Service Provider (ISP) license. We, at *The Star*, have known for several months that a number of companies are applying, but we've also been informed that these companies' plans are somewhat on hold, due to the high costs involved and the uncertainty of profit. In fact, we highly doubt that they will all get licenses. But, seeing as *Al Hayat* has made these company names public, and if we can depend on their source, here is what the newspaper had to say: "The Jordanian companies are NETS, Comcent, Universal Communications Co., Middle East Est., Vectors Co. (Al Mutajjahat) and First Communications Group."

Well, for now, I wouldn't get too excited if I were you. In fact, instead of waiting for other ISPs to enter the market, I would rather see more discounting and special packages coming from Global One / Sprint Jordan. It is well-known that it costs them a lot to provide the service, to begin with, but maybe they can squeeze their prices a bit more.

For Information Only

A Dual Currency Syndicated Loan JD (10) Million & US Dollar (4.25) Million

For

Jordan Mobile Telephone Services Co.



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Participants

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Citibank, N.A. / Amman

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Union Bank for Savings and Investment

Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan)

Jordan Investment and Finance Bank

Jordan Export and Finance Bank



Agent

Arab Bank PLC

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Wilt and Russell

Forever linked in NBA's history

By Michael Wilbon
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

NEW YORK—Very appropriately, they were introduced last and together. Wilt and Russell, Russell and Wilt, as inexorably linked as two competitors in any team sport. Without them, who knows if the NBA would be the global phenomenon it is now, or even if the league would be so happily celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The danger in being the sporting passion of the young and the hip is that there's so much emphasis on now, that what made now possible goes regrettably unappreciated. But by going to great lengths to celebrate its 50th birthday, including coming up with the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History, the league has embarked on a better-late-than-never educational crash course that might actually convince somebody under 30 that Michael Jordan didn't invent the dunk.

Because the NBA has done so little over time to commemorate its history—relative to its sporting brethren—bringing George Mikan, Oscar Robertson, Julius Erving, Wilt and Russell together in Manhattan Tuesday for what amounted to a fireside chat was spell-binding in a way not even a Game 7 can be. Not to be indelicate, but how many people even know that Mikan, the game's first giant, is alive and well at 72? Some young punk reporter, asking a question, addressed Mikan as Mr. Meehan, obviously never having heard of the first great Lakers center. Russell spoke up and said, "That's Mi-kan. He was my idol." Mikan talked about playing 40 exhibitions a year at high school gyms anywhere and everywhere to raise money to keep the league alive in the

late '40s, and that was in addition to the regular schedule. Oscar talked about not even knowing the meaning of the term "triple-double" until years after he'd averaged one for an entire season.

But above all, there were Wilt and Russell, telling stories, giving each other the business. It should have been held in a barber shop. They walked to the lectern together, Chamberlain in a jacket two sizes too small over a black T-shirt and gold chains, Russell with the salt-and-pepper hair and goatee making him look like a basketball professor. Even now, with Chamberlain at 60 and Russell two years older, they walk into a room and instantly consume it.

"This was the best chance," Russell said, "for me to get Wilt's autograph."

For free.

Someone asked of Russell, "Bill, your feelings on being named one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history?" Russell looked at the young man and said, "Oh, I knew that was the case."

Wilt said playing in Boston Garden was like "going to one of the old Roman amphitheaters where they threw the Christians to the lions."

And though he was wearing very dark shades, and though he is, well, Wilt, Chamberlain appeared to get choked up. Things change. He and Russell get along now, fabulously, in fact. "Yes, there was a time when things were strained between us," Russell said, "But we've been fine for a while now. It was all political." Given Wilt's leanings, Russell seemed to have meant that literally.

"I had Thanksgiving dinner six years in a row with him and his family in Philadelphia," Russell said, shocking most of us who assumed they only growled at each other for 15 years. "The competition between us was very, very difficult. He'd feed me and then he'd go out and beat the hell out of me."

When the subject of their respective roles came up, Russell told the story of his college coach, Phil Woolpert, having the grand total of one offensive play to run for him.

"Are you trying to say that otherwise you would have scored, say, 50 a game?" Wilt asked, scowling. "No," Russell said. "Twenty-two."

There was Russell talking about eight consecutive championships with the Celtics, and Wilt, faking being pitiful, saying, "We won eight straight once . . . games."

The inevitable question arose: What did Russell, the best rebounder in history, think of Rodman, the best modern-day rebounder. "Well, he's certainly an entertainer," Russell said. Uh, Bill, how about as a rebounder? "He's adequate. . . . To compare him with Wilt and me is, well, in error."

Wilt talked of having to re-make his game and come up with new moves every season, sometimes even during the season, because Russell's Celtics and Wilt's Warriors/76ers would meet sometimes a dozen times a season in a league that then had fewer than 10 teams.

"Wilt and I, the games we played on Sunday afternoons really introduced the NBA to the television public," Russell said. "You have to have your protagonists, your good versus evil. Ninety percent of the comments I hear when people come up to me are, 'I remember those battles you had with Wilt Chamberlain.' Hell, we played each other 11 to 13 times a year. It wasn't like, 'I wonder what Wilt's doing?'"

Wilt talked about that Game 7 in Madison Square Garden 26 years ago when Willis Reed limped out onto the court—with precise details of specific plays as if the game was played a week ago. It's a shame every player in the NBA couldn't have been sitting and listening. The one thing they all have in common is an obvious love for the game. They watch. Critically.

"The ability to think on the court. I don't think is there," Robertson said. "It's a game now of one-on-one, or two-on-two, or at best three-on-three. It's never five-on-five anymore. I don't see the double-screens, the reverses, the weak-side plays. Even on Chicago, Rodman won't shoot, neither will the center."

The tone wasn't bitter, just matter-of-fact. You don't play the game at the highest level it's ever been played, then lose your competitive urges. Over in another corner, Russell was saying of today's game, "They play, but they're not players. This is what they do as their profession, which is different than seeing the reflection of a person's life. When I was living in the Bay Area, we'd drive to Los Angeles, 12 hours, looking for a game because we heard some guys could really, really play. You wanted to get a sense of your game, what your failings were, what you were good at. Who are the players now instead of guys who just play? The first one who comes to my mind is Hakeem Olajuwon. And of course, Jordan is the ultimate player. He never just shows up, he shows up and kicks ass."

There was that point when the discussion rolled around to "The Greatest Player Ever." Wilt said, "Muhammad Ali."

Russell said, "I don't think there is one. I gave it a little thought—not a lot. You have what I call, the ties. There's nobody who's ever gonna play basketball better than Oscar did in his prime. You can tie him, but not be better than him. Same thing for Julius, for Magic, Bird, and Michael in their primes. You can tie them, but nobody's going to be better."

Sevilla joins battle to sign Bebeto

SEVILLE, Spain—Spanish side Sevilla have joined England's Blackburn Rovers in the battle to sign Brazilian World Cup forward Bebeto from Flamengo.

"He wants to come back to Spain. We should know by the end of the week," a source at Sevilla said on Tuesday.

Bebeto has struggled since joining Flamengo from Deportivo Coruna in the close-season and may even see his place in the side under threat when newly-signed international strike partner Romario recovers from injury.